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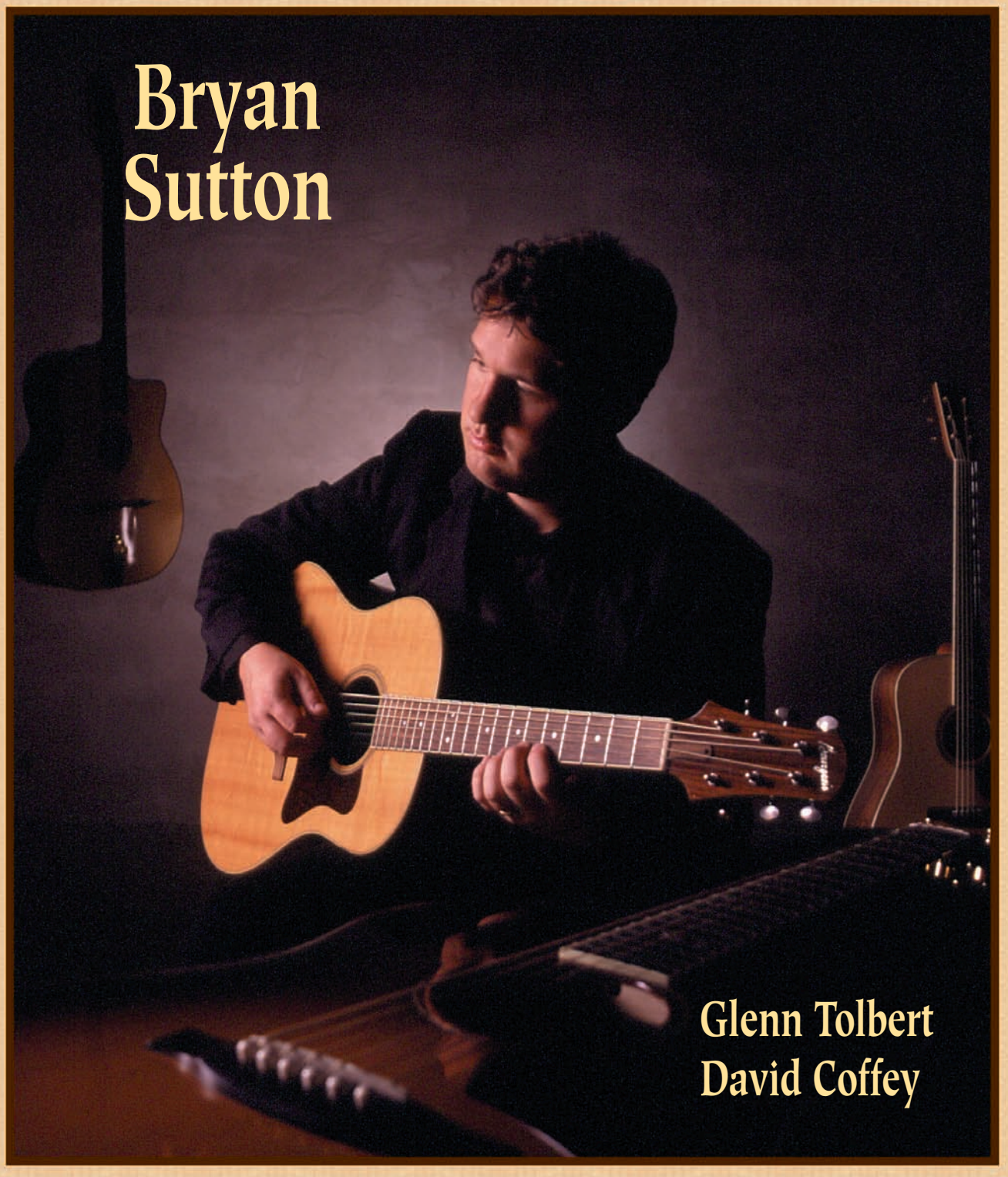
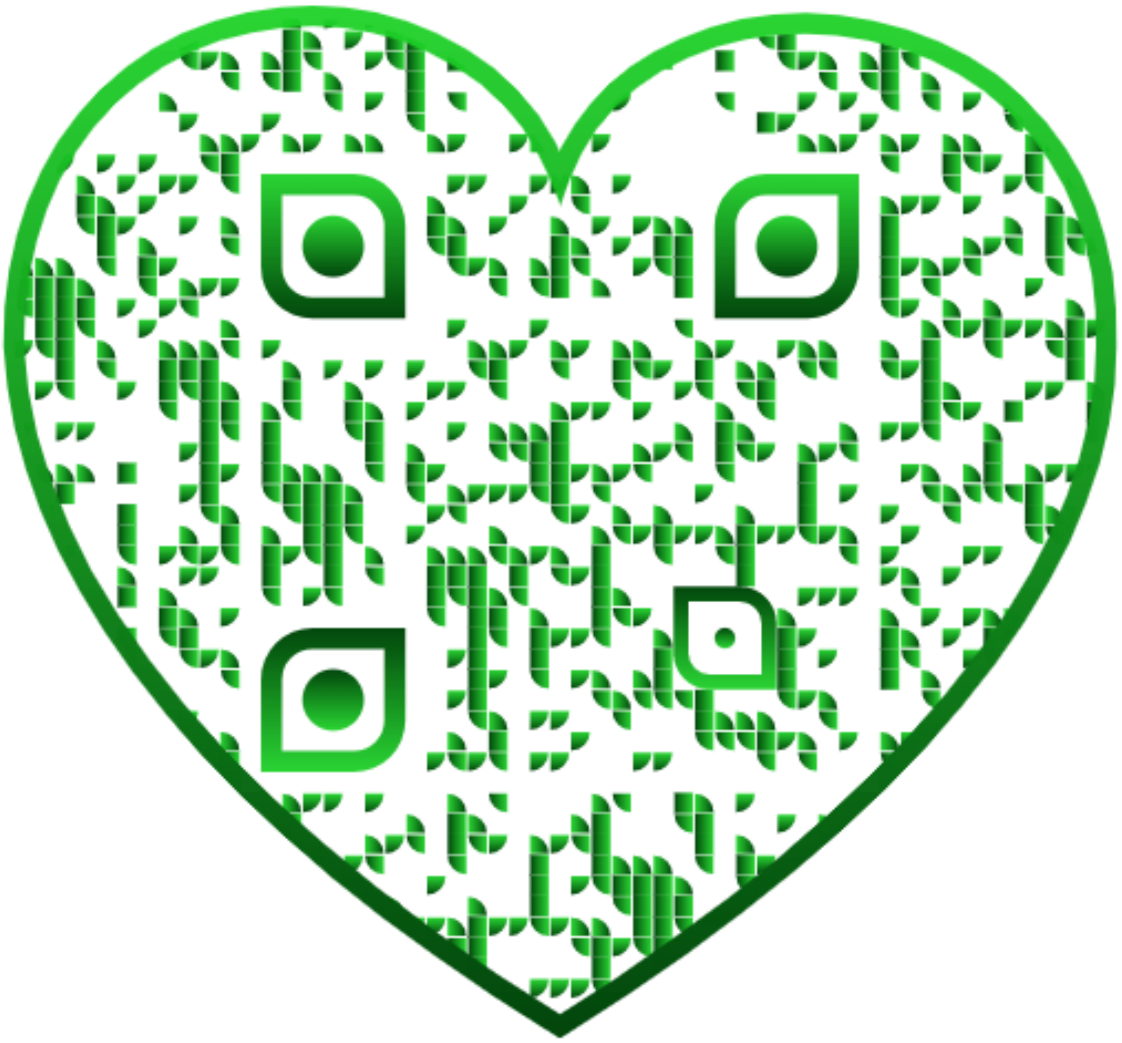
Volume 4, Number 4 May/June 2000





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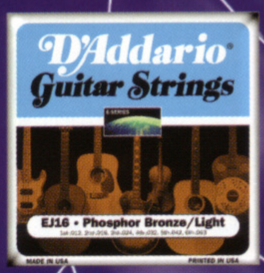

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Cover Photo by Jim McGuire

How to Duplicate & Promote an Acoustic CD Release

1. **Send your music to radio.** No matter how you define your goals, you need to get your music to folk radio. One excellent way to do this is through a **radio-oriented sampler CD program**, such as the OASISACOUSTIC™ sampler CDs, which get the music of Oasis clients to hundreds of key radio stations throughout the U.S.

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EDITOR'S PAGE

Roanoke Bluegrass Weekend

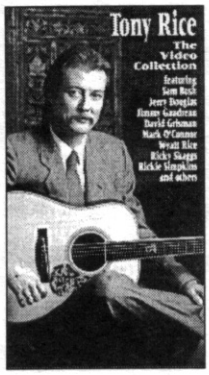
Following the success of our first bluegrass workshop weekend last Fall, we have begun to finalize our plans for this year's event. This year *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* and AcuTab Publications will again host the event in Roanoke, Virginia, at the Hotel Roanoke. The dates this year are 3, 4, and 5 November. The instructor line up includes: Tim Stafford, Kenny Smith, David Grier, and Brad Davis teaching guitar; Tom Adams, Sammy Shelor, and Steve Dilling teaching banjo; and Herschel Sizemore, Chris Thile, and Wayne Benson teaching mandolin. For more information, visit our website: www.roankebluegrass.com.

Flatpicking Mercantile On the Web

By the first of June, we should have our entire Flatpicking Mercantile catalog up and running on the web. We will be set up for online ordering and have designed the online catalog to be data base driven. What this means is that you will be able to search on any artist's name, or even on a song title, and find everything that is offered for that artist or song. For instance, if you wanted to learn how to play "Red Haired Boy" and wanted to find a tab or recording of that tune, you go to the website and execute a search on "Red Haired Boy." The data base will then give you a list of every flatpicking CD, book, or video where that song appears. Check it out at www.flatpick.com/catalog.

Acoustickids.com

If you have children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or friends who are kids and want to learn about playing acoustic stringed instruments, visit our new web site **www.acoustickids.com**. This is a new venture we have started with our partner Jason Hungate and his family. It is an online magazine and resource designed to help kids and parents learn about acoustic stringed instruments and provides information on how to find instructional material, instructors, and instruments. We are featuring articles about kids who are playing acoustic instruments (and their parent's trials and tribulations), teachers who specialize in teaching kids, and many other features related to kids learning music. We will even have: online lessons, answers to frequently asked questions, and a discussion forum. We will have resident expert instructors on each instrument and will be taking them on the road to bluegrass and acoustic music festivals to conduct workshops and put together kid ensembles for performance at the various events. Our first feature story is on the Bulla family and Jenny Ann Bulla is our "on-line" fiddle teacher. This website is brand new and we are just getting started. Check it out and if you have any suggestions for us, send us an email. We would love to hear from you!



Tony Rice

The Video Collection

This video presents Tony at the 1992 Merle Watson Festival with Ricky Skaggs, Sam Bush, Mark O'Connor, Jerry Douglas and others.

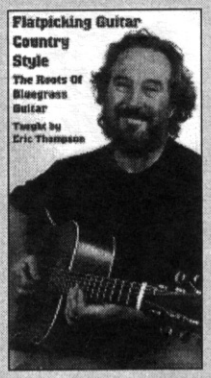
Titles include : TONY RICE ALL STAR JAM Red Haired Boy, Blue Railroad Train, I Wonder Where You Are Tonight, White House Blues • TONY RICE & FRIENDS The Old Home Place, Bluegrass Breakdown • TONY RICE UNIT Dusty Miller, He Rode All The Way To Texas, Salt Creek, Another Lonesome Day, Nine Pound Hammer, Darcy Farrow, Crazy Creek, Little Sadie and Shadows

Vestapol 13058 $24.95

Norman & Nancy Blake

Titles include: OHIO, 1980 Medley: Randall Collins & Done Gone, Medley: Green Leaf Fancy, Da Slockit Light, Briar Picker Brown & Stoney Fork • ALABAMA, 1984 Gray Coat Soldiers • Medley: Knockbauer Polka #1 & #2 & The El Paso Waltz • Medley: Within A Mile, The Durham Rangers, Far From Home, Primrose Last • SOUTH CAROLINA, 1988 Jordan Am A Hard Road To Travel, Prettiest Little Girl In The County, The Little Stream Of Whiskey • IOWA, 1995 • Hangin' Dog, Battleship Of Maine Medley: The Kitchen Girl & Cattle In The Cane, Democratic Donkey Is In His Stall Again ***Vestapol 13059 $24.95***

New Instructional Videos from Eric Thompson



Flatpicking Guitar Country Style

The Roots of Bluegrass Guitar

Taught by Eric Thompson

Eric Thompson will have you flatpicking lead breaks in styles from Maybelle Carter to Doc Watson. You'll learn to pick out the melody to songs like *East Virginia Blues, Sad and Lonesome Day* and *Shady Grove.* You will learn to embellish your playing with "hammer-ons" and "pull-offs" for the real old-time country sound. You'll build a solid technique, advancing step-by-step through single note arrangements of *Thompson's Rag,* fiddle hoedowns *Arkansas Traveler* and *Soldier's Joy,* and a bluesy bluegrass break for *Good Old Mountain Dew* (employing slippery slides and hot runs). Eric's invaluable tips on left hand fingering and right hand pick technique are clearly illustrated in split-screen close-ups.

GW 601 $29.95

Flatpicking Fiddle Tunes

Reels, Rags & Hoedowns

Taught by Eric Thompson

Old-time fiddle tunes are the bedrock upon which acoustic guitar flatpicking is built. Eric Thompson's strong, melodic picking has set a benchmark for taste and tone for nearly four decades. In this video Eric shares soulful arrangements of seven of his favorites, guiding you slowly, line-by-line through classics like *Texas Gals, Fish In The Millpond,* Scottish-Irish rooted *Miller's Reel* and *Stony Point,* mountain modal *Falls of Richmond,* swingin' *Kennedy Rag* and the bouncy *East Tennessee Blues.* You'll build your repertoire and hone your technique, exploring fingering patterns in six different keys which are all clearly illustrated in split-screen close-ups. ***GW 602 $29.95***

Bluegrass Crosspicking Guitar

Taught by Eric Thompson

Crosspicking is an exciting flatpicking technique that is an essential part of every bluegrass guitarist's arsenal. Utilizing repeated patterns on three-string groups, crosspicking captures the bounce of a fiddler's double shuffle and the drive of three-finger banjo Scruggs-style rolls. Eric Thompson lays it out for you in easy to understand steps, illustrating the basic patterns with arrangements of *Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss, Blackberry Rag, Beaumont Rag, Wildwood Flower,* and *Cross-eyed Fiddler.* Split-screen close-ups let you see exactly what and how Eric is playing. ***GW 603 $29.95***

Doc Watson & David Grisman

In Concert

In this unique video Doc and David with their friend Jack Lawrence present their unique blend of country, jazz, bluegrass and folk-music.

Titles include: Bye Bye Blues, Shady Grove, Summertime, Sweet Georgia Brown, Hobo Bill's Last Ride, In The Pines. Long Journey Home, Lonesome Moonlight Waltz, EMD, I Don't Love Nobody, Blue Eyed Jane, Kentucky Waltz, Will You Be Loving Another Man, Deep River Blues, Soldier's Joy, Medley: Big Sandy/Salt Creek, Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms and Roll On Buddy. ***Vestapol 13082 $24.95***

Legends Of Flatpicking Guitar

featuring Doc Watson, Tony Rice, Norman Blake & Dan Crary

Titles include: DOC WATSON & JACK LAWRENCE Black Mountain Rag, Peach Pickin' Time Down In Georgia TONY RICE ALL STAR JAM Nine Pound Hammer, Cold On The Shoulder, Whitewater NORMAN BLAKE & THE RISING FAWN STRING ENSEMBLE Jimmy Brown The Newsboy, Salty, Molly Bloom • DAN CRARY Country Boy Rock N' Roll, Medley: The Fishing Creek Blues/ The Blackbird/Turkey In The Straw/ Bonaparte's Retreat/Arkansas Traveller DOC WATSON & JACK LAWRENCE Bye Bye Blues, Tennessee Stud TONY RICE & RICKY SKAGGS Where The Soul Of Man Never Dies, More Pretty Girls Then One • NORMAN BLAKE & THE RISING FAWN STRING ENSEMBLE Nashville Blues, Medley: The Cuckoo's Nest/Over The Waterfall/Opera Reel/Cherokee Shuffle • TONY RICE ALL STAR Jam Freeborn Man • DOC & MERLE WATSON Medley:Sheeps In The Meadow/ Stoney Fork, Medley: Bill Cheatham/Salt Creek DAN CRARY Lady's Fancy, Black Mountain Rag. ***Vestapol 13005 $24.95***

Doc Watson

Rare Performances 1963-1981

Titles include: Deep River Blues, Nine Pound Hammer, Daniel Prayed, St. James Hospital, Shady Grove, Black Mountain Rag, Stack O' Lee Blues, Tom Dooley, Southbound, Way Downtown, Lonesome Road, Medley: Nancy Roland/Salt Creek, I Wish I Was A Mole In The Ground, Sweet Georgia Brown, Peach Pickin' Time Down In Georgia, Will The Circle Be Unbroken, Raincrow Bill, Tennessee Stud, Medley: Big Sandy/Bill Cheatham, A Roving On A Winters Night and Black Mountain Rag.

Vestapol 13023 $24.95

Doc Watson

Rare Performances 1982-1993

Titles include: New River Train, Shady Grove, Going To Chicago, Blue Yodel No. 12, Sleep Baby Sleep, You Must Come In At The Door, Dear Old Sunny South By The Sea, Amazing Grace, Foggy Mountain Top, What Is A Home Without Love, Nine Pound Hammer, Riding On That Midnight Train, Fire Ball Mail, Shake Rattle & Roll, Make Me Pallet, In The Jailhouse Now, Going To Chicago & Life Gets Tee-jus. ***Vestapol 13024 $24.95***

Doc's Guitar Jam

Featuring Doc Watson, Tony Rice, Dan Crary, Jack Lawrence and Steve Kaufman.

Titles include: DOC WATSON, TONY RICE, DAN CRARY, STEVE KAUFMAN & JACK LAWRENCE Ragtime Annie, Blue Ridge Mountain Blues, St. Anne's Reel, More Pretty Girls Then One, Walk On By, Little Sadie, Black Mountain Rag, Lime Rock, Billy In The Lowground Going Down This Road Feeling Bad • DOC & FRIENDS What Does The Deep Sea Say, Ramshackle Shack DOC WITH TONY RICE, STEVE KAUFMAN, JACK LAWRENCE & T. MICHAEL COLEMAN Wildwood Flower.

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Bryan Sutton

Bryan Sutton is on fire. Consider an acoustic guitar player whose career accomplishments include touring and recording with Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder; playing on two Grammy winning records (Skagg's *Ancient Tones* and the Dixie Chicks' *Fly*); filling in for the injured Tony Rice for two months with the Bluegrass Sessions Band tour (Bela Fleck, Sam Bush, Jerry Douglas, Stuart Duncan, and Mark Schatz); appearing on Dolly Parton's newest recording *The Grass Is Blue* and performing with her on the Tonight Show, Letterman, and Regis and Kathie Lee; and releasing his own solo project, *Ready To Go*, on Sugar Hill records. Not to mention also appearing on recordings by Jerry Douglas, Bobby Hicks, Jesse Winchester, Aubrey Haynie, Rhonda Vincent and various other bluegrass, country, folk, and gospel artists. Now consider that all of this has occurred since we last visited with Bryan about two and a half years ago. And, by the way, Bryan is only twenty-six years old.

Because he has managed to fit a career's worth of work into the past two years, we felt it was time to visit with Bryan again.

Since we covered Bryan's background and early career in our first feature on him (*Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* Volume 2, Number 3, March/April 1998) we will not rehash that information here in this issue. Instead we will roll right into the interview with Bryan. (The issue which previously featured Bryan is still available as a back-issue.)

The last time we featured you in the magazine, you had made quite a name for yourself in bluegrass circles as a member of Ricky Skagg's band Kentucky Thunder. You have since left that band to pursue studio work. What kind of interesting studio sessions have you been involved in since leaving Skaggs?

Things that were fun were the Jerry Douglas record, which led to other work with him on a Jesse Winchester record about a year ago. I like that record. It is a good all-around musical record to listen to. I played on a couple more of Ricky's albums, the *Ancient Tones* album that just won a Grammy and then the *Soldier of the Cross* gospel record. I played on a tune called "Sin Wagon" on the Dixie Chicks' *Fly* album. That album also won a Grammy. Rhonda Vincent's record has come out and by the time this prints Aubrey Haynie's new album will be out. I think that is about all as far as flatpicking. I play on a lot of other stuff that is more country—basically doing the country rhythm strum kind of thing.

Do you play fingerstyle guitar on any of the sessions?

The finger picking that I do is the "chicken picking" style. I still have a pick in my hand, but also pick strings with my middle and ring finger. I used that style of playing on a couple of tunes I recorded for my CD. Anything that sounds like it is fingerpicking is done with a pick. The pick never leaves my hand.

I believe the last time we talked, you were experimenting with your choice of picks. What are you using now?

I still experiment. I don't believe that there is a perfect set of strings or a perfect pick. There is such a wide range of tones

available with different picks and strings. For my main bluegrass flatpick I still use the Dunlop 500 (1.14mm). I usually never go heavier than that. I might use a tortoise shell pick on a gut string solo to get a fatter sound, but usually on a session I will go lighter. I will use a .96 mm for most session work. When I play country rhythm in a session I will go with an incredibly light pick, like a .50mm.

Do you also change guitars for different sessions in order to have access to an array of different tones?

I will usually go into a session with at least three guitars ranging from my Brazilian rosewood Dreadnought for lead things, one of my round shouldered guitars for rhythm because they have a really nice high end that will cut through drums and things like that, and then I will take the OM a lot times for fingerpicking things. Many times, depending on the session, I also take a gut string guitar and a high strung guitar as well. I use an Ibanez guitar that I have had since I was a kid for the high strung guitar.

So when you go to a session you have a trunk load of guitars and select the one that would best fit the song?

Yes, the standard way of doing things is to collect all the musicians in the control room and listen to a work tape and run over the chart. Then basically it is up to me to choose what I feel will work best for a tune. A lot of times a producer will agree with me, but will add something else to it. He might say, "Let's do that, but try this style of strum around this groove." Or he might say, "We want to stay with a gut string on this one."

Could you tell us about the guitars that you own?

I have the Bourgeois Brazilian rosewood Dreadnought (D-150) and three round shouldered Bourgeois guitars. One is the sunburst that is on the cover of the new album, another is a mahogany guitar that is equipped with an L.R. Baggs pick-up system that I use when I need to plug-in at live shows, and the third is the first Bourgeois I bought. It is a mahogany guitar with a bear-claw spruce top. It is the "banjo killer" that I used on several tunes on my record. My OM is made by Bourgeois as well. I also have a 1950 Gibson Southern Jumbo that I will sometimes take out to provide another tone color on a recording. It has a more edgier vintage sound. My gut string guitar is a solid top Takamine.

Don't you have a Selmer-Maccaferri style guitar that you use on the gypsy jazz tunes as well?

Yes, that was made by Maurice Dupont. He is an incredible builder.

When did you become interested in the gypsy jazz style of music?

Probably about the time I moved to Nashville and started hanging out with Aubrey Haynie. He turned me on to some newer players like the Rosenberg Trio and some of the American guys like John Jorgenson and the Hot Club of San Francisco. Those guys are really good guitar players and there is such a similarity to me with the energy that you use in playing that style and the energy in bluegrass. It is basically another outlet. I enjoy getting out there and playing that kind of spirited music. It is fun to play.

You and Aubrey play a couple of those style tunes, "Minor Swing" and "Lady Be Good," on your record. Do you ever get calls to play that style in sessions?

I don't consider myself a jazz guitarist. What I do in that style is my interpretation of it. When I was cutting those songs, I had learned several stock Django things and had gotten an understanding of his style of soloing, but what I did on the record was really my own take on it. When I first cut those songs I was making a conscious effort to stay close to Django's style. As I was trying to play what I had learned and trying to keep it close to what Django did, it didn't feel right. It didn't feel like me. So I went back another day, turned the tape on and played through it a few times without trying to play it like Django.

Has your experience playing that style influenced your bluegrass soloing?

When it comes down to the thought process and the note choice and things like that, I find that the Django style of playing translates back and forth very well. A lot of the tempos are the same and the spirit behind what you are playing is the same.

You have been on two of Aubrey Haynie's recordings and he played on yours as well. How long have you two known each other?

I met Aubrey shortly after I moved to Nashville and was hanging out at the Station Inn at their Sunday night jam. He and I and Dave Harvey and David Grier would do a lot of playing down there. Aubrey and I are similar ages and we started hanging out during the week. He was still on the road with Clint Black at the time and I was still doing a lot of session work around places other than Nashville. This was six to eight months prior to joining up with Ricky Skaggs. Aubrey and I would do a lot of playing together. It was really good for me because I really hadn't done a ton of flatpicking up to that point. He is such an energetic and passionate musician it was fun to hang around with him.

When you left Ricky, I know that your intention was to stay at home and concentrate on studio work, but it also seems like you have been out on the road more than most Nashville session players.

With bluegrass there is the realization that in order to do it so that it is fulfilling,

Bryan performing with Jerry Doublas at Dobrofest 1999 in Slovakia

Dolly Parton with *The Grass Is Blue Band*: (back row, left to right) Jim Mills, Sam Bush, Bryan Sutton, Barry Bales, Jerry Douglas, Stuart Duncan (front row, left to right) producer Steve Buckingham, Dolly Parton, engineer Gary Paczosa

you have to be out there playing on a stage and create that energetic live bluegrass sound. It is hard to do that when you are sitting under headphones all day. It is such a live kind of music that it naturally warrants that you have to go out and do it. I am very fortunate to have had the gigs that I have had come my way. It allows me to pick and choose when I go out.

Tell us about the work you did with the Bluegrass Sessions band.

I got the call for that literally just a few days before the tour went out. I got the call on Friday and the first date was on Tuesday. They were trying to wait to see what Tony's doctors said about his hand. They really didn't know what the injury was, how extensive it was, or how soon he could recover. He was trying to play a little every day and just couldn't do it. I was going to Slovakia with Jerry Douglas that weekend to perform with him at the Dobrofest they hold over there. I spent the whole weekend in the hotel room going over the songs from the *Bluegrass Sessions* album.

What did find particularly challenging about stepping in and playing with that band?

It had been a long time since I had been in a band where every night was so different. Bela really tries to mix things up. We may have played the same set list twice in 30 dates, but no more than that. It was also challenging to solo over more than the three chord standard bluegrass songs. To get out there and try to create that kind of newer bluegrass was fun and challenging.

Had you played that style of music before?

Through jazz studies and things like that. That is basically what bluegrass soloing is about: grasping the melody but still going somewhere and making it your own.

Was there any rehearsing at all during the tour?

We met in Jerry's hotel room the afternoon of the first gig. But that was it. We often used the sound check to practice and work up new tunes.

Did the shows include material that was not on the *Bluegrass Sessions* record?

You know, it was such a musical bunch up there, we played songs from Jerry's records and Sam's records and we played the traditional stuff. I usually had a tune every night that was a feature for me.

How did you get the call to play on Dolly Parton's record?

I think the original pre-production thoughts were between Dolly's producer Steve Buckingham and Jerry Douglas. They rounded up the band.

What challenges did you face in the recording of that album?

It is always challenging to go in the studio and make the recording sound perfect for that artist. Different artists will make that hard or easy. Dolly made that really easy. To me, her vocal style was right along with what we were doing musically. When she would open her mouth there was no question about how things were supposed to feel. It was kind of a magical time. The music on that record was all cut in about a day and a half. Several of the cuts on that record are the first take. Normally an artist will make a scratch vocal and use that as a reference, but her references were so perfect, that is what they kept. It is neat to know that you can still go out and find stuff that is first take live music.

You are a member of the Flatpick-L list serve group on the internet and I noticed that when the topic came up about "playing in the zone" you responded that you were interested in studying that concept and its parallels in athletic and musical performance. Can you comment on that?

The biggest challenge for me right now as a musician is not more chords that I want to learn, or more licks that I want to learn, or playing faster or slower. . . Musically I feel comfortable and confident with my ability. But there is a mental side to being a professional musician that is challenging and sometimes rears its ugly head when you are not prepared for it. It is not a lack of confidence really, but it has to do with the fact that you have done something so much that you begin to think about it too much. You loose the initial energy and spontaneity that made something great in the first place.

When you "try" to recreate something, or purposefully take it to a different level, it doesn't happen. "Trying" to do something and spontaneity don't mix. Studio playing is a wonderful example of that. In a session you will run through a song the first time to get the feel for the charts and make sure everyone's parts are right. Then you come back and go at it again for the actual take. Sometimes it is hard to recreate what you just did because the first time it was right off the cuff and spontaneous, but it didn't go down on tape. You then have to create something that is basically the same thing

for the actual cut. Then your mind becomes more involved and you are less spontaneous.

I found that I encountered the same sort of challenge when I was playing on stage with Ricky Skaggs. I would have to take a solo over a song that Tony Rice may have recorded ten years ago or Doc recorded fifteen years ago. All this is going through my mind, or I should say, I choose to let this go through my mind in my effort to try and play something different than what they had played. I would be consciously trying to make something happen when I really should have tried to just let it happen. I find that there are different methods in books that I have read that deal with sports psychology. I find similarities in what I do to a professional golfer because it is such an inner game.

How do you try to accomplish this goal of playing spontaneously, being in the moment, and letting the music flow out of you without thinking or "trying?"

I am still experimenting with it. It is a choice. If thoughts are getting in the way of what I am supposed to be doing, then I am choosing to let those thoughts interfere. I make the initial realization that this poses a problem. Then I try to tell myself to play in the moment.

Many improvisational players that I have talked to (who tend try to always play spontaneously), have a very difficult time trying to play sessions. When the artist requests that they repeat what they had just played, they can't do it because they don't really know what they had just played. How do you deal with that situation?

I try to get a feel about something as opposed to specific notes. "I want this to feel bluesy" or "I want this to feel sad," or whatever.

Is that what you convey to the artist? "I can't play those exact same notes, but I can give it the same feel."

Yea. That will usually suffice. There is also this "musical" or "musician" line of thinking that I try to live by in the studio and that is that you always try to play what is best for the song. If you have always got that in your mind, that is as far as you need to go with your thinking process.

Do ever find yourself in that "zone" and hear yourself play something that you have never played before and think to yourself "that was great!" and then not be able to play it again when you "try" to recreate it?

Yea, that happens every day. That is part of it I guess. You hope that it gets to the point where you are always creating something new. I think Earl Scruggs is that way. He is still creating. He has been around for so long and so many people have copied his style, but to ask him about what he did, he doesn't know. That is really cool. That is when you really know that you have an original guy. Here is the source. And he continues to be the source.

When I look at Earl, or Django, or Bill Monroe, they were obviously drawing from their influences, but they were also doing something that was totally new. I would love to be like that. When I play some lick and I know exactly where the lick came from, I feel so unoriginal. If I had something that I could call my style, I would say that it would be something that drew from all my influences, but was still me. I would not point to any one specific player as being my main influence.

Does the ensemble you are playing with effect what you play?

A musical fundamental of ensemble playing is listening. You allow yourself to sit back and be aware of what is going on. That is another way you can find the zone. You are confident enough in your own playing to the point where you can have fun with it. You can sit back and listen to the sound of the band and how everything works together. If the fiddle player plays a neat little slide, you can match that with him off the cuff. If the bass player has a good groove, you can get into that groove and enjoy it.

Do you feel that a player has to reach a level in his playing ability where he is really confident with his own playing before he will be able to really listen to what is going on around him?

Yea. That is part of it. If you don't trust yourself you will never get out of that self-conscious train of thought.

Do you practice at home very much these days?

No, I don't. I am trying to find some discipline to do that. The hardest thing about it is, if I do have a day off, to feel like I want to get up and play some more when I have played for 9 or 10 hours a day in the studio for the last three days. I know that I need to be practicing a little more.

If you had the time to practice and you picked up your guitar right now, what is it that you would work on?

Bryan picks one with his dad, Jerry Sutton, at the Station Inn

A young Bryan Sutton (age 10) picks with his grandfather, Grover Sutton

My thought about practice for me right now is that I would like to practice things that you can't practice just sitting in a room playing by yourself or with a metronome. Although that is terribly important, a lot of what I want to work on are things that I can work on while I am playing on a session. I am confident enough in my abilities to know that I will always be able to play something that will be fine and will work, but my goal is to always play what I feel is best for the song. I will listen to different players who influenced me and I feel like, "those were the perfect notes for that song," or "that fill-lick behind that vocal was perfect." That is where I want to go.

Because there are so many standards in bluegrass I would imagine that you have been called upon to play a solo on one of those songs that you felt had been played "perfectly" by someone else before you. How do you approach that?

You come up with your best stuff when you are presented with this kind of obstacle and you can get through it. Ultimately, that is what makes you better. I am frequently challenged on sessions with obstacles like playing a particularly difficult set of notes with a piano player or playing on a real slow song exactly with the click track or metronome. When I can get through that and still make the music come across, I feel like I have done a good job and I feel like I have grown.

Are there any particular sessions that are the most challenging for you?

Most of the stuff we cut here in Nashville is musical to me. When things are challenging is when they are not very musical--when you have to play a bad song. You have to try and create something out of something that is not there. You keep drawing and pulling and trying stuff and it is just not working. A big challenge in session playing is working on sessions like that and still keeping a good attitude about it.

You have a very nice musical variety on your new CD. What was your thought process in selecting the tunes you wanted to put on this recording?

To me, that record is a pretty good representation of what I like and what I like to play. I enjoy the really fast bluegrass songs, but I also really dig trying to write songs like "The Good Deed." I don't want to be one sided or lean too much on playing fast bluegrass and not be able to create a mood with something else.

One of the thoughts I had was that I knew that a lot of people had heard me do that real fast stuff when I was with Ricky, and that is fine, but I didn't want a record of just fast music. That wouldn't be very rewarding to me or the people that would listen to it. It was a goal to try to convey that I enjoy doing other stuff. One of my goals as a musician is to feel like there are lots of different things that I can do. I have always enjoyed trying to be multi-faceted in styles and approaches and not feel like there is one particular style of flatpicking that is the only one that I do.

What is your song writing process?

Different things just come out. I will get an idea, or a feel. The first cut on the record, "Decision At Glady Fork," I had had it in my mind for several weeks that I wanted to come up with an uptempo bluegrass song in the key of G. I had written part of the A part and then let that breathe for a while and came up with some different things. With my song writing, I think I can come up with the best stuff by just letting it happen and not forcing anything. I couldn't be one of these writers that churns out a lot of stuff.

For this recording, there were specific things that I wanted. I kind of have an idea of what I want a song to be like before I know what the song is. With the "Grover Glen" song, I had a general feel of what I wanted the song to feel like and I used that as an initial inspiration.

Do you have any advice for students of flatpicking guitar?

I would recommend that a beginner find a good teacher. I think a good teacher is someone who can help a player find the unique things that work best for the individual student. A good teacher will not be so specific as to tell a student it has to be a certain way. He would allow a new player to experiment with what feels best in terms of body position and technique.

Once a student has learned the basic principles, I would always encourage them to look outside of flatpicking and learn as much musically as they can. They do not necessarily have to study tons of theory, but it might be good to study six months with a classical guitar player and learn to read music and see how different styles and different approaches to the guitar can be used. That is what has helped me the most. There are so many different ways to do things out there and for my own playing classical study was very helpful. It is the same way that a football player may go and take ballet lessons in order to learn to move better.

I also think that you cannot learn too many tunes. Whenever I do get time to sit down and practice, I will try to find some obscure fiddle record and learn some

new tunes. When I go home and play with my dad over the holidays he will have some weird live kitchen tape of somebody playing and we will sit around and learn tunes from that.

Does your dad play lead guitar?

Yea. He is a really good flatpicker. He wouldn't say that, but I think he is.

You told us the last time we interviewed you that your grandfather was a fiddle player and a big influence on your musical development. Is he still alive?

No, he passed away in '94 or '95. His name was Grover Sutton and the song on my record "Grover Glen" was written with the thought in mind of a lot of the songs that I had heard him play. He had a little bounce in his fiddle style and so to me the interval of the notes that occur in that song reminds me of his playing.

The "Chief's Medley" is also named after him because he was a retired Navy Chief and a lot of his friends still called him "Chief" after he retired. The songs in that medley are songs that he used to play. My dad played rhythm guitar on that medley.

You showed me a picture of you and your father playing at the Station Inn. What was that occasion?

That was a gig with Aubrey Haynie, Dennis Crouch, Rob Ickes, Dave Talbot, and myself. We did an all-instrumental night except when Dad got up there, he sang "Mole In The Ground."

Have you ever tried to sing?

I have always sung baritone parts growing up. I sang baritone with Ricky on occasion. I haven't nurtured my voice over the years as I should have. But I think that if I ever got into a band situation where I was a vocalist, I might enjoy that at some point.

On your recording you have four vocal numbers, one with Pat Enright, one with Jeff White, one with the Isaacs sisters, and one with Dolly Parton. How did you come up with those tunes and those people?

I think that there are less and less all instrumental albums being recorded. It is easier to get on the radio with a vocal. Except for the song that Becky and Sonya sing, the rest of the songs are solo vocals. I did not want a big three part harmony thing. I tried to find tunes that I knew would be really strong with a solo vocalist. I thought it was an added feature to an instrumental recording to have a buddy of mine come in and sing without too much of a production.

How did you end up getting Dolly to sing on your CD?

In the sessions for *The Grass Is Blue,* she and I would go in her vocal booth and run through the song to get the tempo right and make sure the key was right and do all of the general production kind of things. It was fun and was good for me because I got to know her a little better by doing that. I guess that when she was talking with some other folks about it she mentioned that she enjoyed working with me. The initial idea to see if she would sing on my recording came from Sugar Hill. That was very cool with me!

Although Bryan is not officially a member of any band and has chosen to stay with session work as his career path, that does not mean that there will not be opportunities to see Bryan in person. As this issue goes to press Bryan will be performing with Jerry Douglas and Jesse Winchester at Merlefest and playing again with Jerry and Jesse at Telluride in June. He will also be an instructor at Steve Kaufman's flatpicking camp in June. Additionally, Bryan says that he may be continuing to play gigs around Nashville and possibly at a few festivals with Aubrey Haynie, Dennis Crouch, Rob Ickes, and Dave Talbot. However, Bryan's wife, Lori, is expecting their first child in July and so Bryan also intends on spending much of the remainder of this year at home. He says, "Ninety-nine percent of my leaving the road band was that for me my place is having a steady family life. I need that. It adds to my well-being. With a little girl coming along, I plan to be wrapped around her finger pretty soon."

Bryan Sutton endorses Bourgeois Guitars, L.R. Baggs pick-up systems, and Levi bags and straps.

The tune Bryan has chosen to play for us on our companion CD for this issue is called "High Heel Shoe" and we have provided the transcription to Bryan's first solo on the pages which follow. Bryan says that this is an old traditional fiddle tune he learned as a kid growing up in Asheville, North Carolina. Bryan learned it from some of the fiddlers who played at jam sessions in the community. He credits two fiddlers in particular, Marvin Faulkner and Tommy Bell, for popularizing this tune in Western North Carolina. On the recording Bryan plays guitar and mandolin and his friend Byron House plays bass.

Those of you who do not get a subscription to the audio CD can call 800-413-8296 to sign-up for a subscrition (6 issues for $30), or you can buy the single CD that goes with this issue for $6.00.

On our *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* Audio companion CD to this issue you can hear all of the songs which have been tabbed out in this issue plus interviews with our feature artist!
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High Heel Shoe

Traditional

Arranged by Bryan Sutton
Transcribed by Brad Davis

High Heel Shoe (con't)

White Oak Swamp

by Craig Vance

White Oak Swamp

Here's a fun tune in the key of C. "White Oak Swamp" comes from an early 1970's Norman Blake recording, *The Fields of November*. I learned it back then from the vinyl LP (remember those). Since then it has been made available on compact disc. The cool thing about the CD is that *Fields* is combined with another of Blake's recordings, *Old and New*. There's plenty of fine flatpicking on that one, too. This combination is available on Flying Fish Records (FF 70004).

When you get to the second half of the first part, it is much easier to fret the 3rd string on the fifth fret with your third finger and the 2nd string on the 3rd fret with the first finger simultaneously. That way you can achieve a flowing roll, which will sound much smoother. Then fret the 1st string on the third fret by shifting your first finger down to the E string, and pull off to the open E. All along you can keep the form with the first and third fingers using as little movement as possible.

The only other tip I have for this tune is during the 1st part of the 2nd section. The pull off from the E note on the D string to the open E is best done as a "push off."

If you push upward on the E note and then release to the open D, you can keep your third finger anchored in place on the C note on the 5th string. It can stay right there from the note before the push off, to two notes later when you raise it to get the open A. All these are just economizing the left-hand motion, which is not only easier, but sounds much smoother.

Now, put down the remote, and get in tune!

by Norman Blake
Blake and Blake Publishing

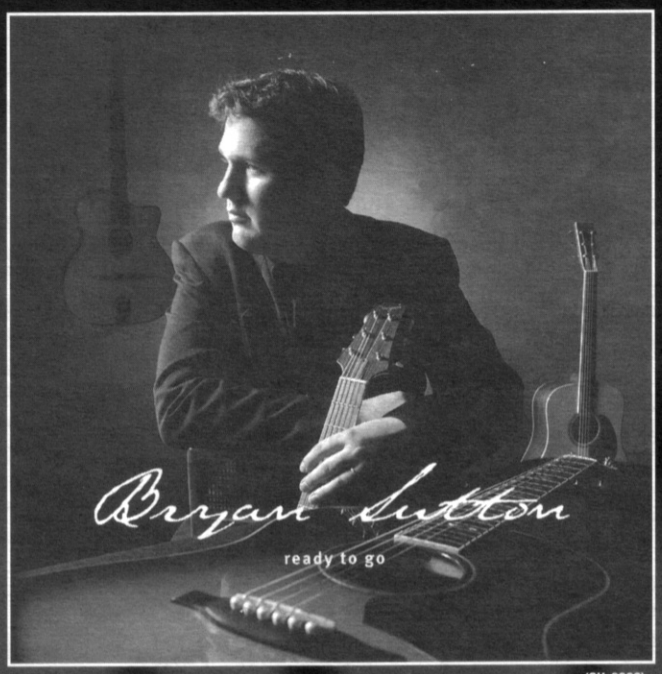
White Oak Swamp

Arranged by Craig Vance

YOU'LL WANT TO SIT DOWN WHEN YOU HEAR THIS ONE.

Bryan Sutton

r e a d y t o g o



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Bryan Sutton is also a featured guitarist on Aubrey Haynie's new album, A MAN MUST CARRY ON (SUG-3908) and Dolly Parton's THE GRASS IS BLUE (SUG-3900).

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Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee

Should I learn to read music to be a Bluegrass Flatpicker?

My students and callers have been asking me this question for at least 25 years. The main reason most people ask is because they are hoping I'll let them off the hook by telling them that it's totally unnecessary. If they don't have to go through the drudgery of learning to read formal music notation, great, because most people don't want to, unless they have to. OK, here you go: "It's totally unnecessary."

Actually the word "totally" is a bit extreme, so let's talk.

A symphony orchestra has 50 members. Each individual member must play a part that was written to fit the other parts. The only way to prevent chaos is for each member to play exactly what is required. You could think of this as being a dictatorship: no individual freedom of expression. But it almost has to be that way because on guitar you have 6 strings; so in an orchestra it takes 6 violinists to make the chord that you can make with just one person. All 6 of those guys have to be "on the same page" and at the same moment. The only way to get them together is by having one writer, or too many cooks will spoil the broth.

In bluegrass, we all need to play together and be organized in order to sound good as a team, but we have more freedom within the structure than does the third chair violist in an orchestra or the 4th chair clarinetist in a marching band.

Bluegrass has the same structure as rock, blues, jazz, and folk. We all must conform to a tempo, a key, a chord progression and an arrangement (no freedom there), but not all of our freedoms have been stripped from us. As long as we agree to those four things, we get to do whatever we want in other ways. The bass player can use whatever bass line he wants to play (as long as it fits the agreed chords). The guitar player can play rhythm as he chooses and so does everyone. We get to play whatever we want in our solo just as long as it confines to the 4 requirements, and that we play it at the agreed time.

This is true for all the "popular" styles of music: rock, blues, jazz, folk and others. So we could divide music into "formal" styles and "informal" styles. Or classical orchestras and marching bands, vs. popular styles. That being said, "popular" styles don't have to learn to read formal music notation and "formal" styles do. Feel some relief? Good.

Keep in mind that we can and do (in some cases) borrow the "orchestration" concept in bluegrass (good examples would be The New Grass Revival and The David Grisman Quintet). But even in these cases, we don't necessarily have to read the orchestrations on paper. We can simply verbally plan these moves at rehearsal.

But suppose you found some sheet music from the old country. It's up in the hayloft in a barn in Ireland. You think, wow, what an interesting title! I wonder what that song sounded like? I wonder if it would make a good instrumental for our band "The Old Time Long Lost Knee Slappin Moonshine Hollow West Virginia Cuttin Up Ramblin Creek Mountain Boys." Sure wish I'd listened to my blue-haired piano teacher, and learned to read because this could be a tune that no one plays but us, and I'll be famous for introducing it to bluegrass. Who knows, it might make you so famous that you can leave bluegrass and go mainstream country! Or you might someday want to transpose some classical pieces to your bluegrass guitar as you start expanding your horizons and developing a crossbred style.

Another good reason to learn to read might be a situation where you have an opportunity to play bluegrass with a symphony for a special event or for a recording. National Banjo Champion Mark Maniscalco had an opportunity to front the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra, and was faced with understanding how to read music so that he could communicate with the orchestra. Mark is the teacher of our product called "Twin Banjo Workshop." These are isolated and specialized reasons for wanting to learn to read music, but very valid reasons.

There are some downsides to music notation. It has caused more "music dropouts" than any other aspects of music combined. The reason is that humans can only think of one thing at a time. Reading has traditionally been taught parallel to learning how to play the instrument. This is simply too much all at once! Suzuki has realized lower dropout statistics because they teach the kids to play, and then later introduce the reading. Very wise considering the violin itself requires several things to think about all at the same time. Add reading to the mix, and you just frustrate kids (or adults) to the point of causing them to give up. Hey, some of these dropouts might have become great, had the teacher been wise enough to lighten the simultaneous load in the onset (As a matter of fact, this is the secret that makes our video "Your First Guitar Lesson" so successful with beginners. It simply requires the beginner less things to think about at once than any other beginning guitar video)

OK, you will find next to zero famous bluegrass stars who ever learned to read music. Have you ever seen a famous bluegrass band on stage with music stands? No, never. Did they just memorize the sheet music before going onstage? No, never. Bluegrass developed from informal "non-reading" origins and it simply isn't of a reading nature. Same with rock, country, blues, jazz, etc. Bluegrass is meant to be learned from the stuff that our heroes have played. We accumulate the "mix-and-match" parts such as licks, fills, intros, and endings, and we learn to improvise and eventually play whatever we prefer at the moment.

More importantly, this develops our ear! We listen to a solo, we try to figure it out, and as a result we develop the ability to know what we've heard, and where that is on the fingerboard. Over time our library of memorized material (and our sense of where to put it) gets bigger and bigger, and we have fun experimenting along the way as we jam with friends at festivals and in living rooms. Each person you get together with gives you another little idea and your skills are always growing.

The formal music notation staff consists of 5 lines. Each note is placed either on a line or between two lines. Each note is drawn differently to represent how long it lasts. If a note is lower on the paper, it is lower in pitch, and the higher on the paper, the higher in pitch. Additionally, there can be other surrounding symbols that indicate how a note should be treated. All of this information needs to be evaluated and executed before moving on to the next note. It's a good system, but pulls the musician away from the instrument and as a result, your attention to your instrument suffers. Giving full attention to your instrument will make you a more skillful player in your speed, accuracy, tonal quality, and finesse. It will make you learn to play in much less time.

So we've said that "band and orchestra music" is more structured than bluegrass, jazz, country, blues and rock. I can name one style that makes bluegrass seem formal in comparison:

Dixieland. Why? In Dixieland, everyone is playing lead at the same time! It's a musical free-for-all! At least in bluegrass we take turns and we decide in advance who gets what break. Actually, being less formal is what makes Dixieland so exciting and festive. The players are not all "exactly" just playing a solo, because to some degree they have the experience to know to play a "counterpoint" to each other. In a sense, they are like a marching band that wasn't given an exact assignment but "sort of" know what their individual assignment "should" be. In other words: trombones (in the marching band) have been blueprinted to play a counterpoint to the trumpets. In Dixieland, they know this and "informally" attempt to accomplish the same thing. So they don't sound exactly "spit-&-polished", but hey, it's art, there's no rules, and the result is fun and exciting. You just can't get a feeling like that from stuffy old perfect orchestras or marching bands.

But what about tab? Tab pulls you away from your instrument too, but is a lesser evil in my opinion, and I'll explain why. Tab is customarily used as a supplement to audio and video lessons. You can get tabs alone, and can use them exclusively to learn a song, but you really shouldn't unless you are already a relatively experienced player. Why? Because you need to hear how music sounds to be able to absorb the nuances such as accent, smoothness, drive, subtitles of timing, expression, and personality. In other words: MUSIC HAS A FINGERPRINT. There's a reason why you idolize Doc Watson or Tony Rice. Those guys sound special, and much of why they sound special can't be written in tab or music notation.

What exactly is tab? Tab is a map of your guitar. Since all the notes we play in a song, happen at a different time, we can't put the frets in the map. We put a number on the string that the note is to be played on, and that maps out which fret to play behind. Next we start borrowing from music notation by using the timing notation and the bar lines that section off the measures. We also (perhaps annoyingly) decided to mimic formal music notation by making tab upside down. Has that ever bothered you? Did you wonder why they (who is they?) did it that way? They did it so that our highest pitched guitar string would be highest on the page, to give us a sense of higher pitched notes being higher on the page, so as to follow the established concept in formal music notation. I personally think tab should not include timing notation. I think you should learn your timing from the sound. All tab should do is act as a reminder to help you memorize the notes. If you don't have the sound recording however, you'd need the timing in order to make sense out of the piece. If you only use the tab as a supplement to the sound recording to learn the piece you'll have the benefit of hearing it played with truly all of its important aspects.

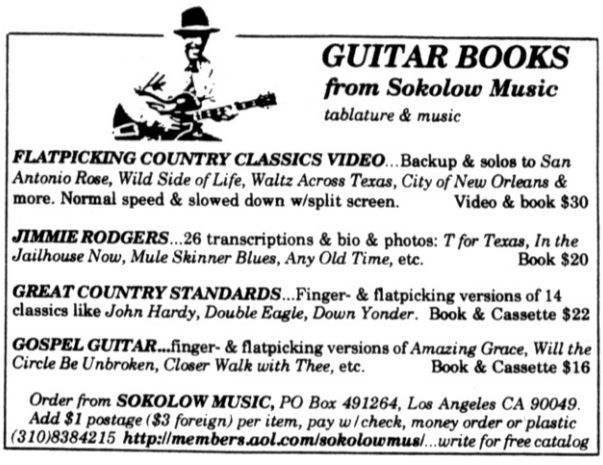
So did we create tablature because we hated formal music notation and wanted an easier system? No. Tab actually predates today's formal music notation. Makes sense. Someone develops an instrument that you blow into, makes up a song to play on it, wants to keep from forgetting it, doesn't see a Marantz Music Study Recorder handy, and draws a little diagram of what he plays. (I'm talking Fred Flintstone days here). But other guys start making other instruments that you pluck or beat on, and the "blow chart" doesn't work for the plucked instruments, so someone decides to make a "universal" notation that is equally lousy for all instruments and he decides to call it, "formal music notation." And the musical version of "Esperanto" is born.

You have my blessing, as a bluegrass flatpicker, to go ahead and read tab. Hey, "any way I can get it" is fine with me. But if you allow tab to become your "crutch" you will never get to where you want to go. You should use tab mostly as a supplement to listening. Listening is developing your ear. Developing your ear is becoming a musician. All of our beginners are given a "figure out a tune" assignment on their very first lesson! I've said that in past columns. Granted, we give them an easy assignment at first, but one that's appropriate for their experience level. Our products reflect what we teach our local personal students. We developed the video *Understanding the Formula of Music Makes it So Easy* for background understanding of music. Then its follow up: *How to Figure Out Music from Recordings* to teach people to learn the way the bluegrass pros learned: by ear.

In conclusion, try to use tab only as an aid for getting a piece of music memorized. Especially in your first few years. Seek materials that let you hear the piece you are learning, and see the teacher playing it full speed, slow and phrase by phrase. This way you won't be robbed of all the subtitles that just can't be documented on the printed page.

Learn to read music if you choose to become involved in some specialties that are actually outside of bluegrass, but occasionally have a cultural handshake with bluegrass. If you think of yourself as an "Average Joe Bluegrass Hobbyist," learning to read music honestly isn't worth the time and headache. Non-reading people that have called us over the past 25 years feel they have to explain to us that they won't buy our learning materials if they have to read music. So many people think that they are in the minority, but they are actually in the majority! We produce over 70 music instruction products and have only one that has the formal music notation in it, but it also teaches without it. It's called *Country Piano with Ron Howard*. I doubt seriously if anyone that's bought it has read the formal music notation in it. Country piano just simply isn't of a reading nature.

If you have any questions, you can call us toll free at 800-543-6125 or check out or web site at: www.musicians-workshop.com. See ya next issue.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Flatpick Rhythm Guitar

by Joe Carr

John Herald Rhythm Style

Many of us first heard the exciting sound of flatpicked guitar during the folk music boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Pop/folk groups such as The Kingston Trio, Peter, Paul and Mary, and the New Christy Minstrels used guitars prominently and occasionally featured guitar solos on their recordings. Some fans of this music eventually found their way to more authentic forms of folk music including bluegrass. The Greenbriar Boys featuring John Herald were an important step on this journey for many listeners.

Many urban folk fans found the gritty music of real folk musicians to be an acquired taste. Young urban groups such as the Greenbriar Boys presented this music in a "cleaned-up," somewhat "pretty-fied" version that was easier for young city folks to like. Their eclectic tastes and slightly tongue-in-cheek presentation also helped win new fans to a variety of "real" folk musics.

John Herald sang lead and played guitar with The Greenbriar Boys. Most of their recordings feature Herald's distinctive flatpicked intros, solos and turnarounds. The group was originally a trio formed in 1958 including Bob Yellin, Eric Weissburg and Herald. By 1959 Weissburg was replaced by Ralph Rinzler. Rinzler was later replaced by Frank Wakefield and Jim Buchanan joined the group on fiddle. They recorded on the Electra and Vanguard labels in the 1960s and a "best of" album was released in 1972.

While some of their arrangements seem too "folky" by today's standards, Herald's guitar work was very impressive and well played. His leads were strong and his backup very active and tasteful. "We Need a Whole Lot More of Jesus" is a great example of Herald's lead and rhythm style.

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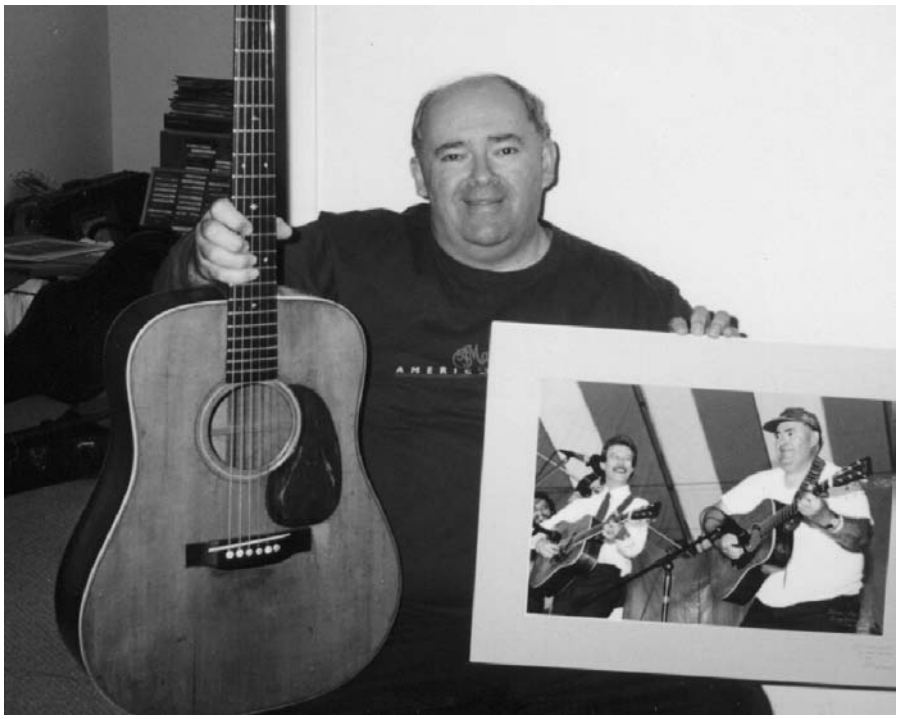
We Need A Whole Lot More Of Jesus - Rhythm

Arranged by John Herald
Transcribed by Joe Carr

Flatpick Profile:
Glenn Tolbert

by John Taylor



Glenn Tolbert with two of his prize possesions: His 1937 Martin D-28 and a photo of him performing with Tony Rice

For several hours a day on a quiet surburban street in Birmingham, Alabama, the sounds of an old Martin guitar can be heard coming from the ground floor music room of flatpicker deluxe, Glenn Tolbert. It is here that Glenn teaches, practices, and picks with friends literally every day of the year. Regardless of the venue or the time, Glenn never show the slightest sign of being tired of playing his beloved bluegrass music.

Born fifty-odd years ago in nearby Oneonta, Alabama, Glenn has spent most of his years in the local area. Oddly enough he started playing the guitar in Detroit Michigan at the age of eight, after his family had moved there from Alabama. There he heard his older brothers playing, liked it, talked his folks into a guitar and some lessons, and has never stopped since.

What was your first guitar and what were your first lessons like?

My first guitar was an O sized Martin like the one Marty Robbins played. I know the fellow that has it now and one day I hope to buy it back. The teacher I had didn't teach bluegrass but taught me to use a pick. My first song was, "Mary had a Little Lamb." He taught me songs by Buddy Holley, Elvis, and those guys.

When were you introduced to bluegrass and flatpicking?

When my family would come home to Alabama from Detriot to visit my grandparents, about two or three in the morning we would come through Cincinnati, Ohio where a DJ by the name of Wayne Raney played bluegrass on the radio. We would always have it on and I'll never forget hearing Monroe's "Uncle Pen." When they did that "G-run" on the guitar, that was it for me. It was the sound I wanted to do. That song and "Blue Moon of Kentucky" were my favorites then. Later on I heard Doc Watson and that opened up a whole new world for me.

An event that changed a lot of flatpicker's perspectives was Doyle Lawson's Denton, NC festival in 1982 with Tony Rice and the Bluegrass Album Band. I remember we were both there and it was the first time I ever met Brad Davis (a very young man at the time). I believe that was when Tony became your hero for life, wasn't it?

Yes, it really defined what I wanted to do, I learned a lot from Tony's playing, and also J.D. Crowe's. The timing and the tone of these guys is just so awesome.

Where did you get your start as a musician and a teacher?

My family moved back to Alabama in the early sixties and I started with a band and also played in guitar and mandolin competions at Fiddlers Conventions at Oneonta and Walnut Grove, which is supposed to be the oldest in the Southeast. A fellow named D.M. Fox and myself would finish first or second guitar or mandolin every time. I started teaching in 1976 at Fretted Instruments in Birminghan with the help of the owners Herb Trotman and Ricky Stone. In 1978 I started teaching guitar to group classes at UAB in Birmingham, and still do so today, along with group classes for a large steel company in town. I also have students in my home on a daily basis. My wife, Donna, is very supportive and does all the bookwork and bookings for my band.

Can you tell us about your current band?

Well, it's Glenn Tolbert and Co. with my sister-in-law Dianne on the bass, good friend Kevin Atkinson on banjo and the one I'm most proud of my thirteen year old son on the mandolin. He's doing great and also is becoming quite a good flatpicker. I hear him at night sometimes in his room playing along with Tony on "Freeborn Man" or some of his other tunes. I think young Allen Tolbert will be heard from one day.

Maybe we have the makings of the first father/son *Flatpicking Guitar* profile stories. What about some of the highlights of your career?

I've had the opportunity to play with Bill Monroe at Cathederal Caverns, to

pick with Doc Watson, my great friend Roland White, and last year jammed for an hour or so with Norman Blake at Steve Masterson's Acoustic Cafe in Hayden, Alabama. But my biggest thrill ever came at Foggy Hollow in Websters Chapel, Alabama when I got to preform on stage with the Tony Rice Unit. We did "Black Mountain Rag," I sang "Rolling in My Sweet Baby's Arms" with Tony I both doing a guitar break, and then at the end of show Tony called me back on stage and we did "Big Mon." I'll never forget that day in 1993. Tony was so nice and always has been. I don't want to forget my good friend Marty Stuart either.

What about the Country Boy Eddie years?

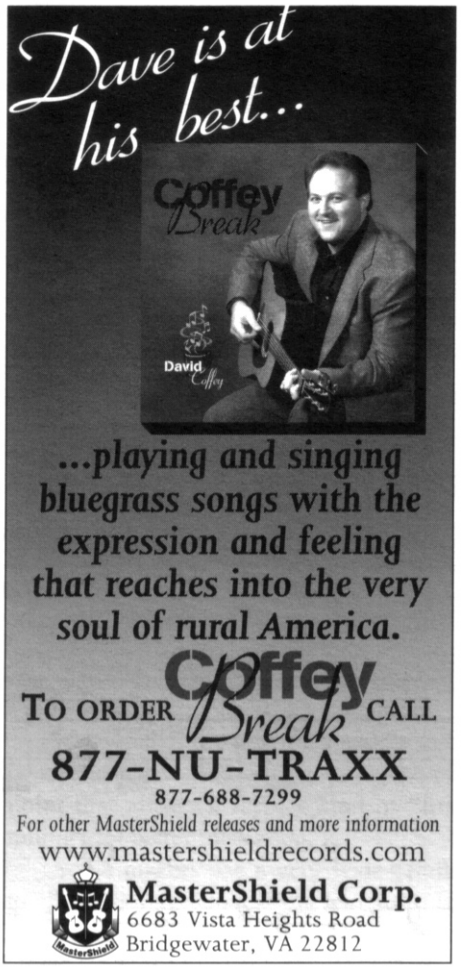
Eddie had a real popular show on at 6:00 AM every morning and I played with him for ten years, also read the sports scores, too. It was great, I got to meet and play with a lot of great stars like Vern Gosdin. Tammy Wynette got her start on the Eddie Show.

Well its time to tell us about the guitar you play. What is it and how did you acquire it?

It's a 1937 Martin D-28 Herringbone, an absolutely wonderful guitar. A good friend of mine from Montgomery, Alabama, Mike Mason discovered it at a vintage guitar store in New Jersey. He and Herb Trotman helped me get it, and I'll always be indebted to them for their help, and also to expert guitar man Marion Kirk from Huntsville for comimg down to help me check it out.

How about the tab you've arranged for us?

Well, I'd never seen it done for guitar before, It's "The Ballard of Jed Clampett." I used to watch the TV show and love Earl Scruggs banjo at the first of the show and at the end. I'd thought it would be neat for the guitar, because its a good foot tapping, happy song. Hope you all enjoy it.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The Ballad of Jed Clampett

Capo 2

Arranged by Glenn Tolbert

Guitar Maintenance and Repair

by Frank Ford

Looking at Saddles

If you've followed along on this series of articles on guitar setup, you've noticed that we started at the peghead, and have proceeded down the neck to the body. Now, we've arrived at the "business end" of the guitar, where the strings deliver their vibrating energy to the top. Along this path, the first thing the string "sees" is the saddle, against which it is firmly held.

First, I'd like to clear up a point of confusion. In contrast to many other stringed instruments, the flat top guitar's bridge is the saddle and the saddle is the bridge.

OK, that sounds dumb. On an archtop guitar, mandolin, autoharp, banjo, fiddle, cello, and lots of other stringed instruments, the bridge is the piece between the vibrating surface and and the string itself. The saddle of a violin, for example, is the piece at the upper corner edge of the top, against which the tailpiece bears. The adjustable archtop guitar bridge has two parts: the base, and the saddle, over which the strings pass.

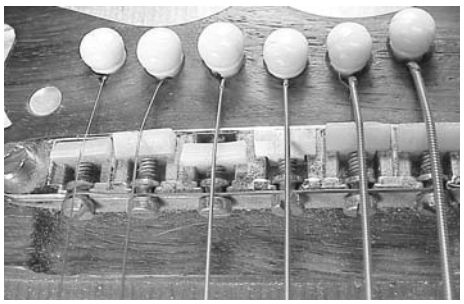
On the flat top guitar, the bridge is the big wooden (usually ebony or rosewood) part that holds the strings via holes in the back side, or with bridge pins. The saddle is the small structure against which the strings bear, and through which they conduct their vibrating energy. Saddles are usually made of bone, ivory, or a synthetic material, such as Micarta or Corian, both of which are familiar counter top materials. There are also modern synthetics advertised to give the tone of natural materials and to have other desirable characteristics.

I won't spend much time talking about the various saddle materials and their tonal properties in this article. I'm more interested in the mechanics of the saddle—the configuration and strength. Suffice it to say that tone is subjective and we're each entitled to our opinion. Personally, I like bone for its hardness, durability, strength, tone and traditional appearance.

Because the saddle is the termination point of the vibrating string, its position is critical to good intonation. The neck, nut and frets are fixed in their locations, which have been calculated precisely to "divide" the string into appropriate lengths to produce the notes of the musical scale. In order for these vibrating lengths to work out correctly, it's necessary for the saddle to be in the ideal spot. Each string stretches as it is held down to the frets, and as it stretches, its tuning goes a bit sharp. And, each string reacts a bit differently to this stretching action, depending on its composition, its diameter (mass) and the not to which it's tuned.

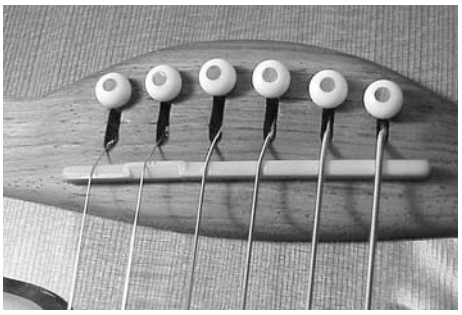
To "compensate" for this differential change in pitch as the string is fretted, the saddle's position may be adjusted to optimize the results.

Here's a bridge with an adjustable saddle:



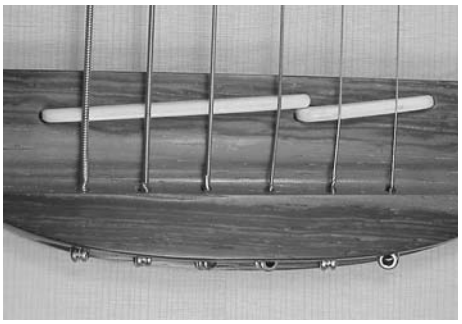
Each little saddle insert may be adjusted for optimum intonation correction. This is a swell idea from the standpoint of tuning. Just "dial in" each string, and the job's done! The only problem is that, tonewise, it sucks. The massive brass and steel hardware is a very effective mute, literally impeding movement of the bridge by the vibrating string. More of the string's energy is "reflected" back on itself, and dissipated as heat, and a bit more vibration of the other anchor point of the string (the peghead.) If you doubt this effect, sit and play an unplugged solid body electric guitar sometime. You'll easily be able to hear the peghead vibrating.

Most steel string designers provide for intonation compensation by striking a compromise between each of the individual ideal saddle positions, placing the saddle at an appropriate angle:



Additionally, the top of the saddle may be cut to allow each string to bear on a point that allows a further kind of "fine tuning" for better intonation.

Some makers use a very wide saddle to allow for individual string lengths to be more precisely determined, while others prefer a divided saddle:



Later on, I'll write more about compensation. For now, I'd like to concentrate on the structural factors that influence the tone of the guitar and structural integrity of the bridge.

Take a look at this bridge:

It's what I'd call an ideal saddle setup. The string emerges from the bridge pin hole and makes an angle as it crosses the saddle, pressing downward on the saddle. The downward pressure of the string is very important for tone production.

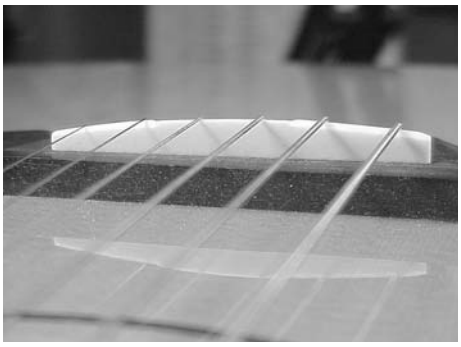
Try this test: stick your finger under the string in front of the bridge and lift. Go ahead, pull hard. If you can lift the string clear of the saddle, you're not getting enough downward pressure on the saddle. I'm exaggerating just a bit, but really, it should be nearly impossible to lift a tuned string off the saddle.

In the most ideal bridge, I think the saddle should protrude (as it does above) about 3/16" above the wood.

The saddle may sit "captive" in a groove as it does in the bridge above, or it may be inlaid in a channel cut all the way through at the ends, as in this Martin guitar from the 1950s:

Either way, the saddle works the same. The "through cut" saddle needs to be glued in place to achieve the same strength as the captive one, and is generally considered an obsolete style. Today's under-the-saddle piezo pickup elements make the glued, through cut saddle even more obsolete.

Here's a saddle that's too high:



In fact, here's a bridge that's somewhat ill-conceived. Notice that the saddle is not only really high, but that the wooden bridge is flat, while the saddle has quite an arch to match the arcs of the strings and fingerboard. Because it doesn't have good support for the string tension, this bridge is more likely break than one with a lower saddle.

It's a matter of the string angle over the saddle, known as the "break angle." Gee, even this little baritone uke bridge is about to crack under the load of its nylon strings:

The tension of the strings isn't so great, it's just that the saddle is so darn high.

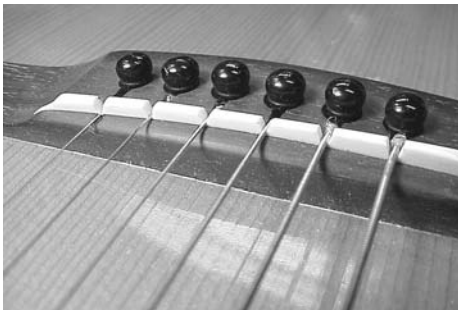
This guitar bridge has a similar break angle problem:

Here, the saddle is so close to the bridge pin holes that, even though the saddle is an ideal height, the break angle is causing an intense forward pull on the saddle.

Saddles with this kind of break angle are under a lot of pressure. Sometimes, they will break the front of the bridge. Sometimes the saddle itself will break. With this kind of load, the strings will cut or crumble little notches into the saddle, regardless of whether it's bone, ivory, or synthetic.

Strings with a "strong" break angle, soft saddle material, or simply the passage of time can result in the saddle developing these little notches under each of the strings. Sitting in the little notches, the strings will be held quite rigidly and not allowed to "roll" microscopically side-to-side. For hard driving flatpickers, this is often the cause of premature string breakage at the saddle. Additionally, the extra bend of the string over a very high saddle puts even more strain on the string at that point.

Now, speaking of notches:



Yep, this is an example of how NOT to lower action. Not only are the strings sitting in deep notches, but they also no longer have sufficient break angle and downward pressure for good tone.

This old timer has no break angle:

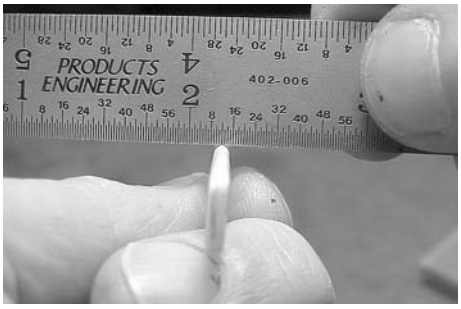
The saddle is so low that the strings barely touch at all. If the saddle needs to be lowered to this extent, the string angle can be restored by cutting little grooves, or "ramps" in the bridge between each bridge pin hole and the saddle. The bridge with the two piece saddle at the top of this article also has very clear string ramps. Even if the saddle is lowered, the strings will have good downward contact.

It's possible to design a bridge with the pins too far back from the saddle:

This saddle could not be lowered very far before losing good string down pressure. String ramps would have to be deep and very long, cutting right through the decorative pearl inlay.

Ideally, the very top of the saddle is rounded, so the string "exits" toward the fingerboard, contacting the saddle at a

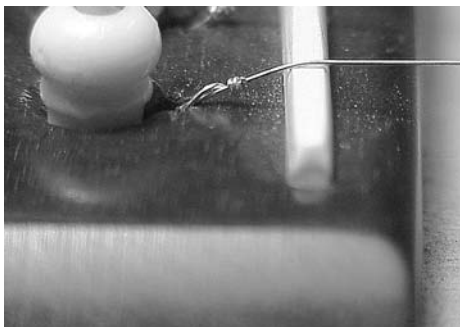
single point. It's easy to visualize the exact shape of the saddle top if you simply lay a straight edge across it:



The shadow cast by the ruler highlights the profile of the saddle underneath. Similarly, the string also casts a shadow to make the saddle profile easily seen.

A saddle may be cut so that the top tapers back toward the bridge pins, or even so that it tapers the other way, toward the neck. In any case, the string needs to leave the saddle, bearing on a single point.

This is a flat saddle top:



A saddle this flat on top pretty much guarantees a fuzzy, muddy, or downright buzzy tone.

As you can see, it only takes a second or two to diagnose the most obvious saddle difficulties, if you have an idea of what to look for. Saddles need support, so I'll have more to say about them when I discuss bridges in the next issue. . .

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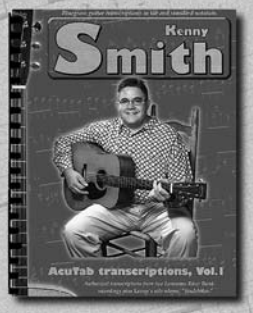

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Flatpicking & Folk/Acoustic Rock

by John Tindel

Amie

Last issue we finished up with Duane Allman's charming instrumental "Little Martha." This time out let's meet another lovely lady, a country-rock classic and timeless singalong called "Amie." Pure Prairie League really nailed this song which, although it was written 30 years ago, manages to remain vibrant, alive and firmly a part of American pop vernacular. In fact, as anyone who plays acoustic guitar music in public will attest, this song is one of the most often requested and fervently sung-along-to numbers in popular music today, right up there with "Brown Eyed Girl," "American Pie" and the "Theme from Gilligan's Island." (No, I won't be supplying the tab for Gilligan's Island anytime soon, sorry)

Our first coy glimpse of this sweet lady is a very nifty little A major inversion that sets up the intro. The cool thing about this chord is that it uses the entire frequency range of the guitar from the low E to the octave above the high E. Just fret the D string (4th) at the 7th fret with the first finger, second finger on the 3rd or G string on the 9th fret, third finger on the 10th fret of the 2nd or B string, and the pinkie on the top E string on the 12th fret at the octave. Firmly holding this stretched-out position may be a little tough for smaller hands and fingers but keep working on it until you can hold all four notes down without muting or buzzing. With those four held down, use the standard alternating base line with the open A and E strings while down stroking across all the fretted strings, once for each base note. Those of you smart enough to have gotten the companion CD for this issue will hear exactly how this works. This kind of reminds me of something I heard once, about how trying to talk about music is like trying to dance about architecture. Which is why springing for the CD is such a good idea. For me, at least, one listen is worth a thousand words.

The intro lead part is pretty straight forward-remember to slide the notes at the end of the second measure together for a more fluid, less jerky feel. At the end of this section, check out the A chord and the following G and D chords that happen up the neck at the 9th and 7th frets. Bridge across the 2nd, 3rd and 4th strings (B, G and D) at the 9th fret with the flat part of the forefinger and then hammer up to an A minor 7 shape with the 2nd and 3rd fingers to form the A chord. This is followed by bridging the same three strings on the seventh fret, again with the first finger, and hammering up again in an arpeggiated pattern to form the G chord, then pulling off, releasing back to the barred forefinger for the D chord. Hard to explain, easier to visualize, and simpler yet to do.

I should mention that, having no copies of this record lying around, and having last actually heard it probably fifteen years ago, what you are getting here is my best recollection of how this solo was recorded. Those of you lucky enough to own this song (I believe it was on *Busting Out*) may find slight differences here and there, but generally this is really close to note for note. At any rate, here is the solo for "Amie" that I have been playing for years. It is all in there—slides, bends, hammer-ons and pull-offs, you name it.

This is one of those special songs that never gets old no matter how many times you play it. How fortunate for "Amie" that she will forever remain a fresh faced young girl, full of the promise and naive innocence of that lost era from whence she came. Hats off to Pure Prairie League for a true country-folk classic. Stay tuned until next issue when we will check out more folk acoustic rock tunes that feature great guitar playing.

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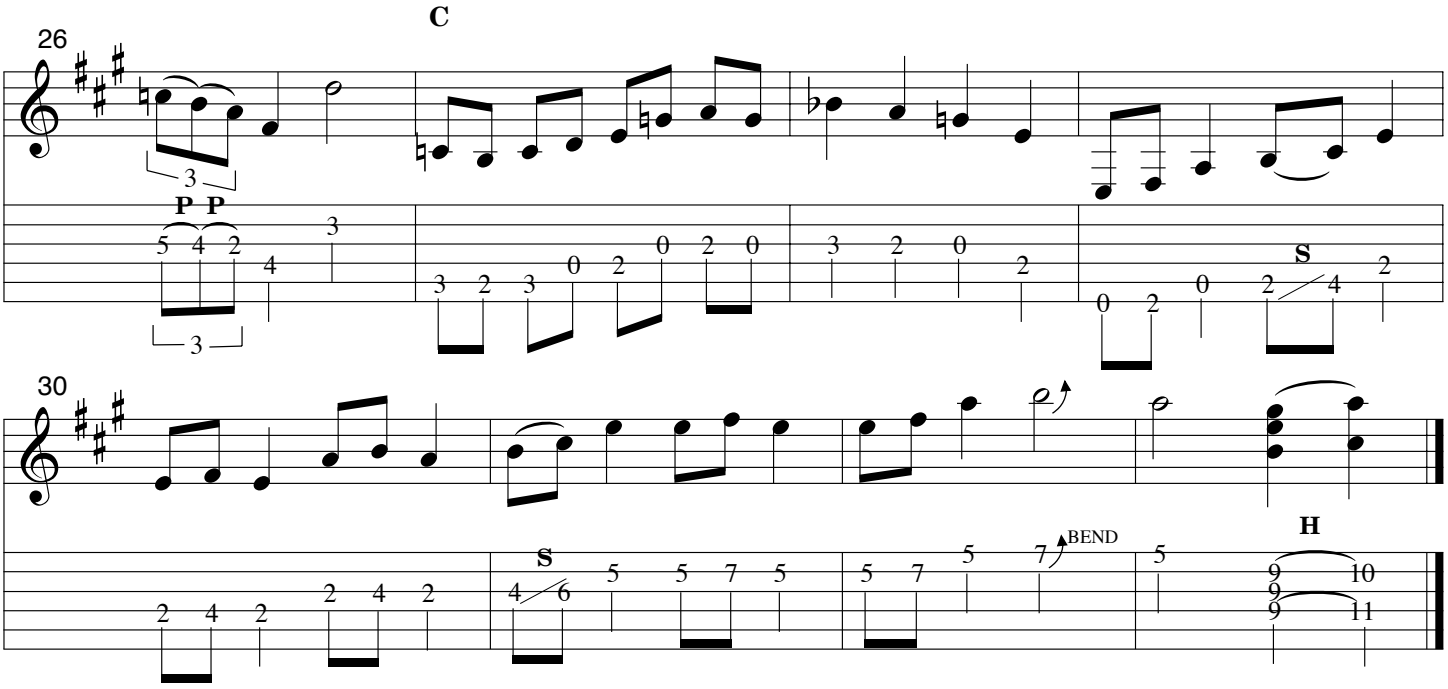
Amie

Arranged by John Tindel

Amie (con't)



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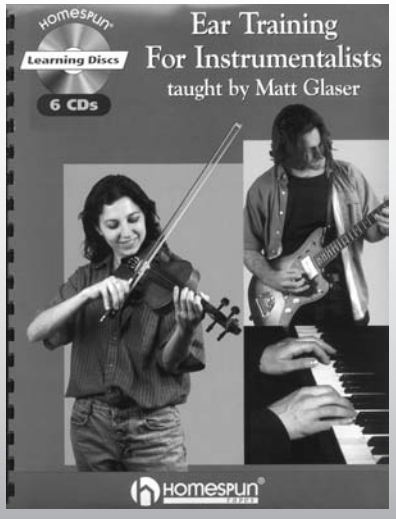

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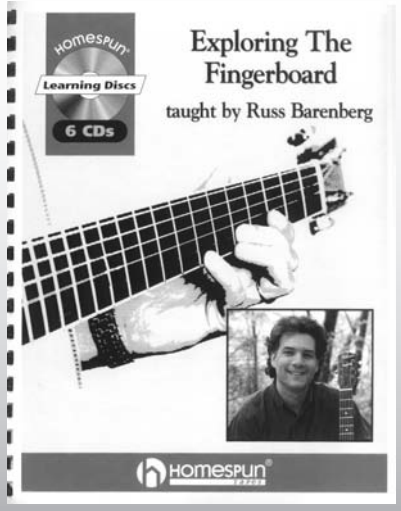

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Kaufman's Corner

by Steve Kaufman

The I Miss You Waltz

Well friends, here we are getting together for another issue of the world's greatest flatpicking magazine. I am now in a hotel room in Grapevine, Texas getting ready to start a packed out workshop. I am getting this to our nervous publisher just in time but I hope you all like this tune. I wrote this one about 10 years ago when I felt I wasn't seeing my (now ex-) wife enough and started missing her a little. So here you have the "I Miss You Waltz."

The key with this waltz, as with almost all waltzes, is the control of your sustain. Any note that lasts longer than an eighth note should ring on top of the next note in the melody. This has been transcribed right off of the CD so it is a little more difficult than the usual materials I like to supply to magazines. Watch out for the quick triplet hammer-on pull-offs. You can replace some of the trills (hammer-on pull-off) by hitting the first note of the three and then the fourth note leaving out the middle stuff. There are also many triplets in this piece. Try to accent the first note of each triplet to give the string of notes some separation.

I think the best way that you can work through this waltz will be to listen to the accompanying CD several times and then start to work through the arrangement. Finally, try to play along with the CD. I could spend a lot of column space by breaking down each measure for you but the song is so long I better cut off the commentary here. I look forward to seeing you down the road somewhere and hopefully at the Flatpicking Camp in June. Good luck with this original Steve K melody and have fun with it. Bye for now, SK. 800-FLATPIK www.flatpik.com and now www.palacetheater.com

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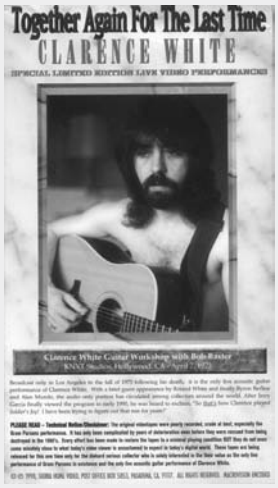

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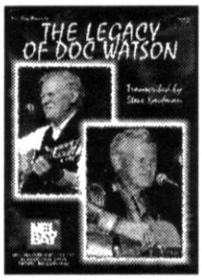

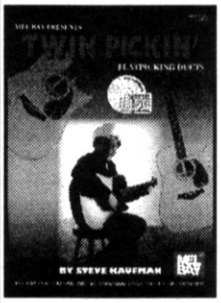

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I Miss You Waltz

Written by Steve Kaufman

I Miss You Waltz (con't)

I Miss You Waltz (con't)

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If you're hungry this song will not curb your appetite, but will only make you want to eat more flattop pancakes. Oh! don't forget the syrup! This is another flattop instrumental written with my crazy double-down-up technique. It is in the key of D and incorporates the traditional down-up-downs all through the song (amazing, ain't it!). It has a very distinctive melody and can fall in the traditional as well as the slightly progressive. It explores a part of the D, G, A and E/Em chords that are very different. I use a slightly different choice of notes for each chord than the norm and that makes it sound very distinctive. That's what being your own player is all about. You'll also notice that the d-d-up markers are on top and if you so choose, try them out. If you want to just play the song with traditional down up downs, that's great too!

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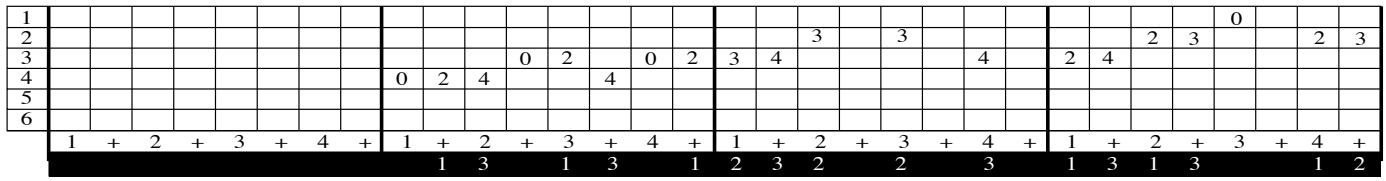
Fluffy Biscuit

written by Brad Davis bdm/BMI

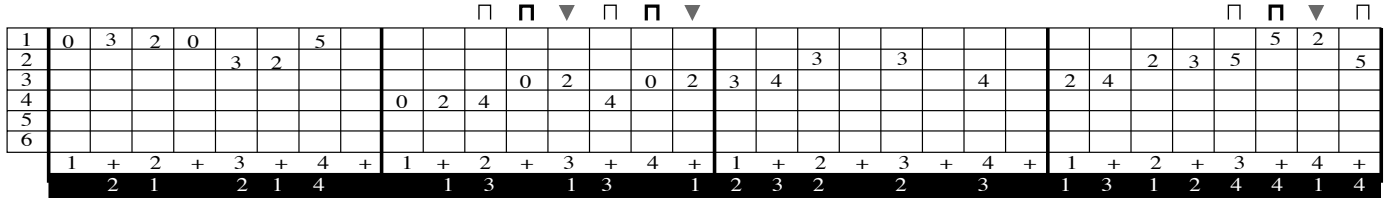
⊓ DOWN STROKE
⊓ EMPHASIZED DOWN STROKE
▼ UP STROKE
1,2,3,4=down stroke
+signs=up stroke

Key D

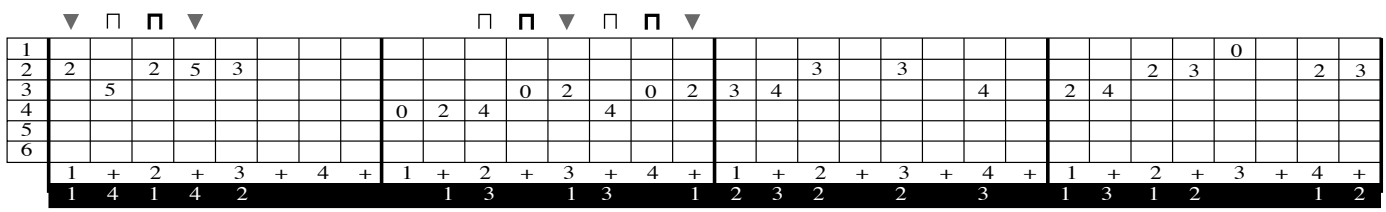
Line 1 - part 1a-D G A



Line 2 - D G A



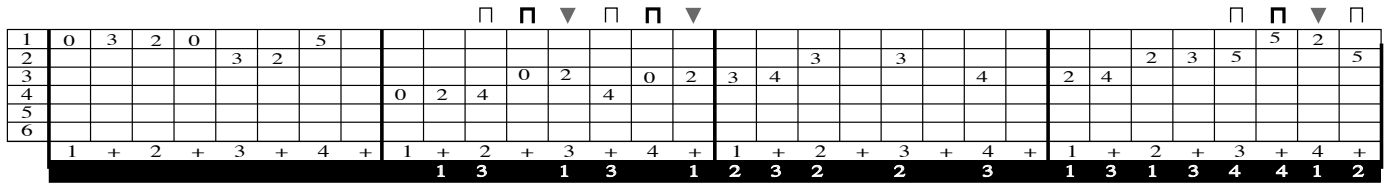
Line 3 -A D D G A



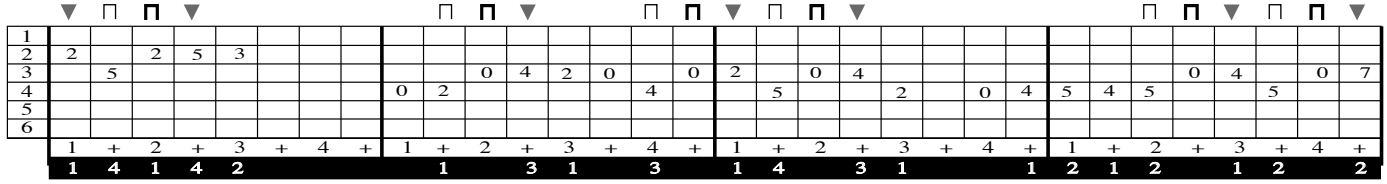
Fluffy Biscuit (con't)

written by Brad Davis bdm/BMI

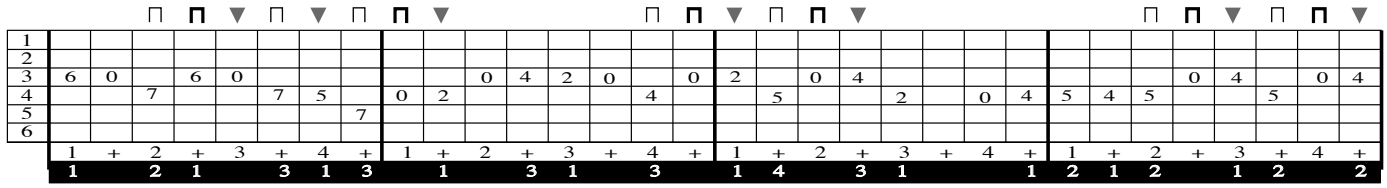
Line 4- D G A



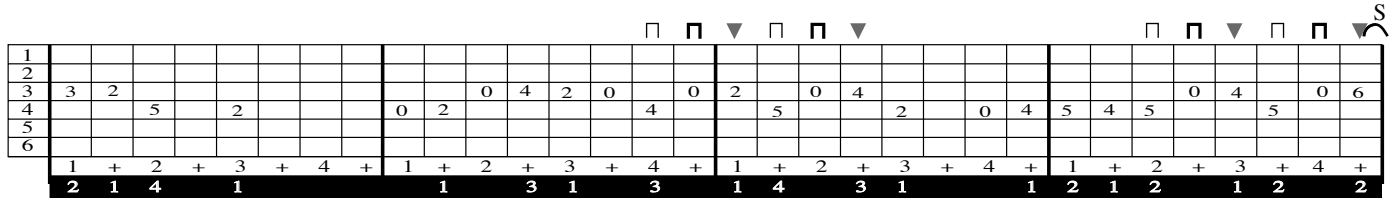
Line 5-A D part 2a EM G



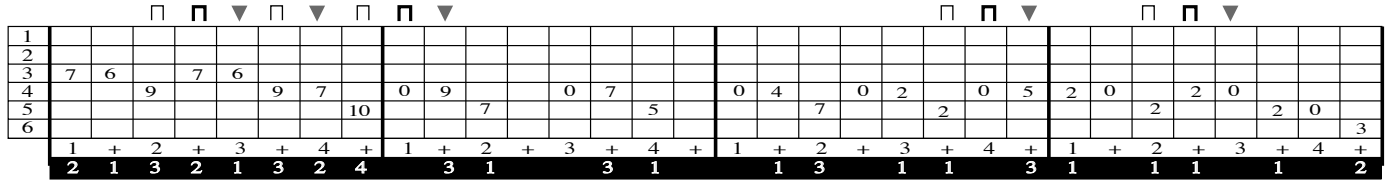
Line 6 A EM G



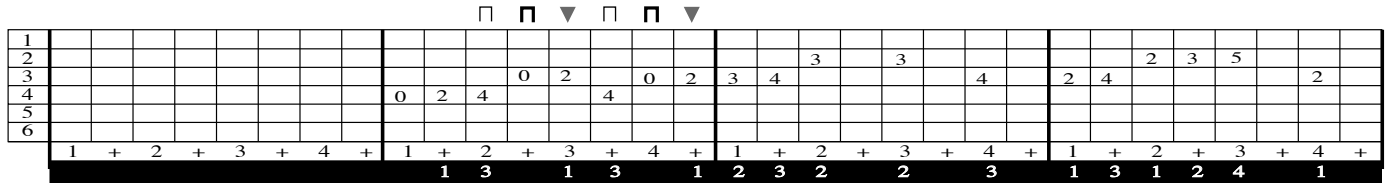
Line 7-A EM EM G



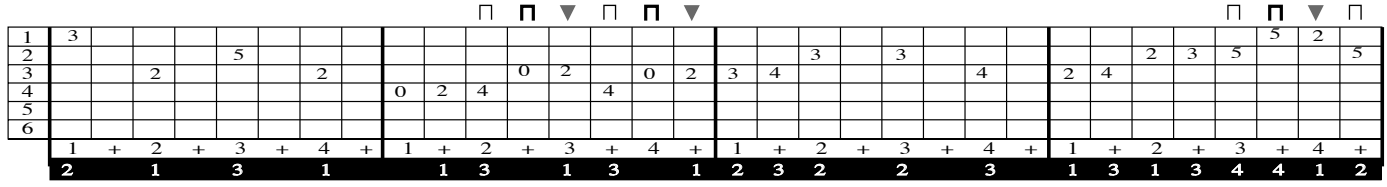
Line 8-A EM



Line 9-A part 1b D G A

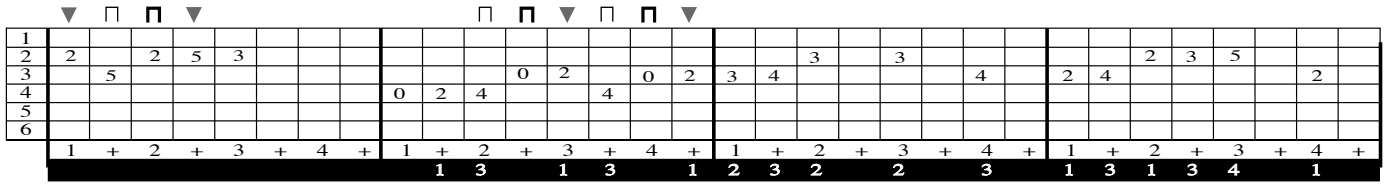


Line 10- D G A

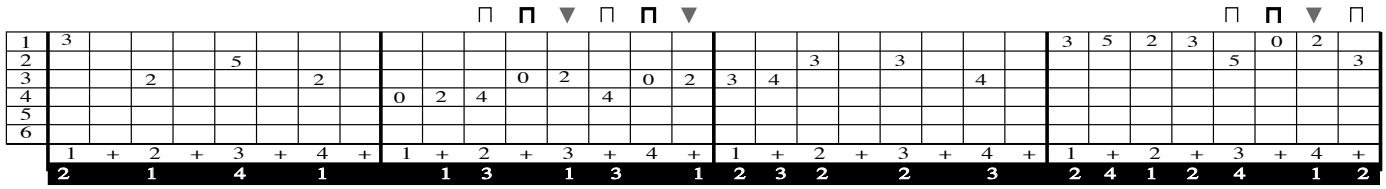


Fluffy Biscuit (con't) written by Brad Davis bdm/BMI

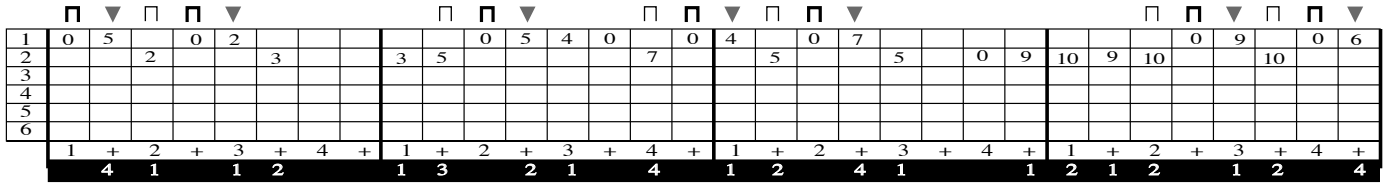
Line 11- D D G A



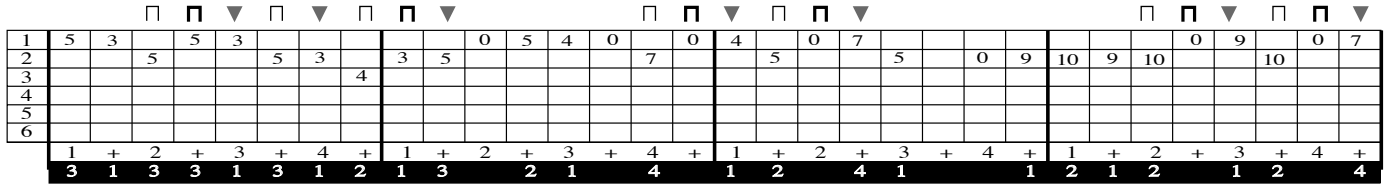
Line 12- D G A



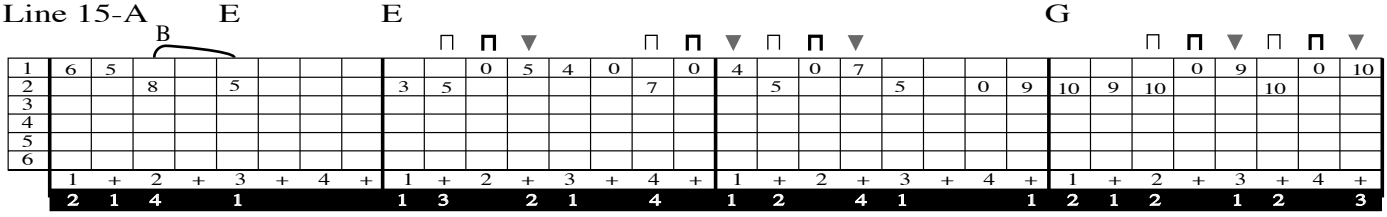
Line 13 D part 2b E G



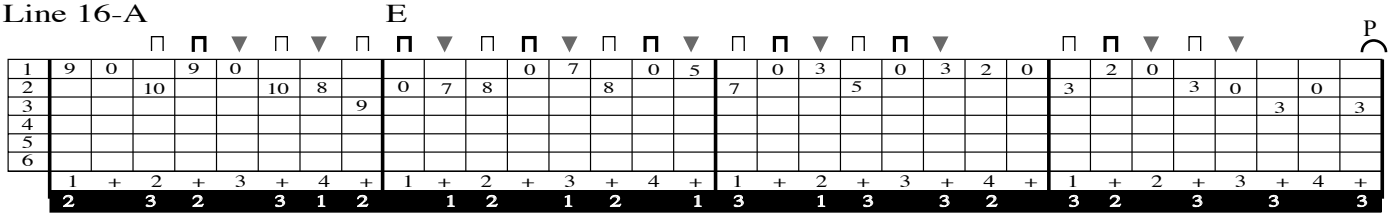
Line 14-A E G



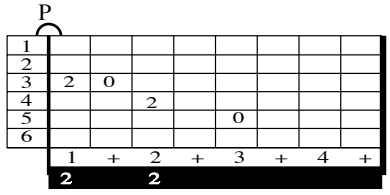
Line 15-A E E G



Line 16-A E



Line 17- A THE END



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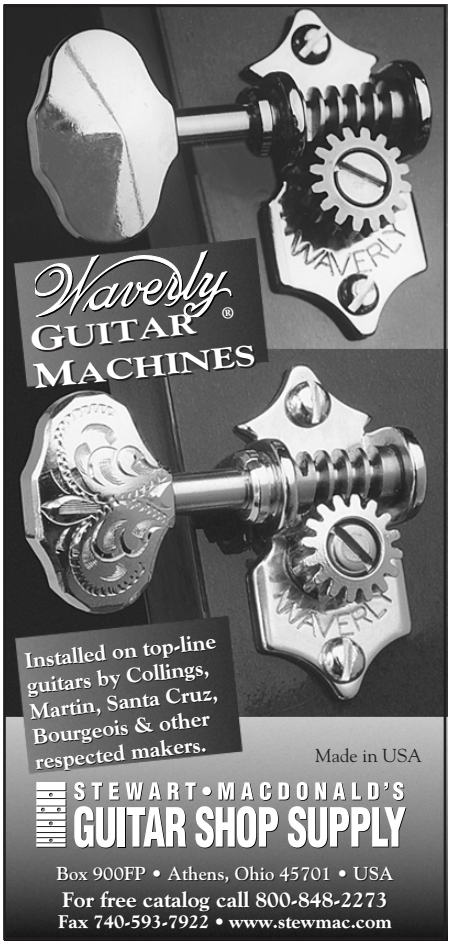

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Break Time

by Chris Jones

Split Breaks

When coming up with arrangements for a band or when arranging songs on the spot in a jam situation, you're likely to deal with the split break at some point. A split break is a solo—usually over the entire verse or chorus of a song—which is divided up between two or more instruments. It's frequently used in slow songs where playing a whole break with one instrument can be, to be blunt, just a little boring. A split break can also liven up a fast song, and I've provided an example of that in this tab.

When I hear split breaks that involve lead guitar, it seems that it's more often used for the first half. Perhaps it's because it feels more driving to have a banjo lay in there with rhythm guitar behind it, after the more sensitive (and lovely) guitar section. There's no reason, however, not to have a guitar break follow something else. If it is on an uptempo song, though, it's important to play with plenty of authority, as if to say "Hey everybody, this is actually a guitar break, not a blank space, okay?"

Since there is less space in which to develop a break, it's tempting to throw in all the hot licks you would've put into a full break, which will tend to make it sound like a hot lick mish-mash (which could be a good name for a band). It's better not to look at the break as something you need to fit things into, but as something you're going to play that will enhance the song, and complement whatever will follow you, or whatever came before. More than in other situations, the split break is a good time to shed the craving for applause. It could easily detract from the musicality of your break.

As an example, I've tabbed out a split break I played on my newest CD (which may or may not be released by the time you read this). The song is one of mine called "Uphill Climb," and I had previously recorded it with Weary Hearts. The first time I recorded it, we played a four-way split break, and I played the second half of the verse. This time, I changed the arrangement slightly and played over the second half of the chorus. I used as much rhythmic variation and dynamics as possible, but still kept it fairly simple (you can't get much more simple than the second measure, which is basically one note, with a little slide up to it). Since I wrote about trail-offs a couple of issues ago, I included the trail-offs in the tab. In this case, trail-off licks help to fill the space before the vocal comes back in; I wouldn't have used them if I had been playing the first half of the break.

One thing I made sure to avoid was playing the same intro lick that Dan Tyminski did to his half. Because both halves start out going to the same C# note (or B capoed up), it would have been easy to do. If you're the one going second, try to listen to what was just played and play something that fits with it, but takes it in a slightly different direction.

It should also be noted that while the split break is a valuable arrangement tool, it's good not to overdo it either. Too many split breaks can make your music sound choppy. It's important to let instruments stretch out a little sometimes, even on slow songs. It's sort of like always eating eggs sunny side up instead of...actually, it's nothing like that. Never mind. Enjoy the tab.

Uphill Climb

Capo 2

Arranaged by Chris Jones

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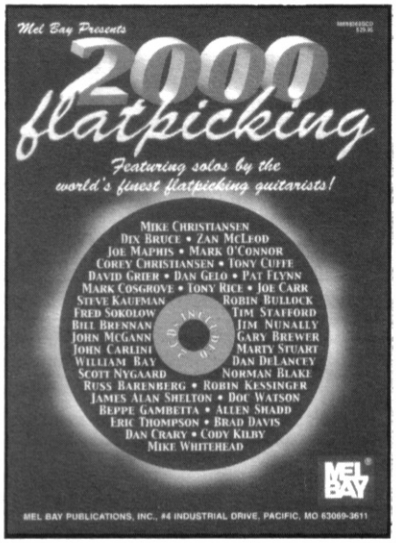
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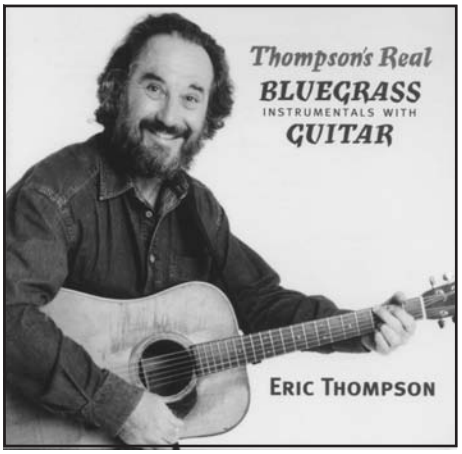
Jam Tunes

Paddy On The Turnpike
by Eric Thompson



Editor's Note: Eric Thompson was the cover artist for our Jan/Feb 2000 issue. In that article, Bryan Kimsey mentioned Eric's great flatpicking record Bluegrass Guitar *which was recorded in 1978 and then later reissued on cassette as* Thompson's Real *This recording features Eric doing some great flatpicking with an all-star support band which includes David Grisman, Jody Stetcher, Todd Phillips, Tony Rice, Paul Shelasky, Rick Shubb, Sandy Rothman, and Markie Sanders. Eric has now released this recording on CD and added two duets with David Grisman ("Rain & Snow" and "Salt Creek"). A tablature book is also available. Eric provided us with a sample cut from this recording for this issues "Jam Tune."*

Some tunes just GRAB YOU! For me, "Paddy On The Turnpike" was one of those. I first heard it on an exciting live tape with Don Reno on banjo and Mack Magaha on fiddle, probably about 1961, just as I was starting to flatpick. Even in their hopped-up bluegrass rendition, something about the modal melody, and even the name itself, evoked a much earlier time to me. "Who was Paddy?", I wondered, "and what was he doing on the turnpike?" It turns out that "Paddy On The Turnpike" really IS quite an old tune, appearing in American manuscript collections of fiddle music as early as 1842.

"Paddy" is the common Irish nickname for Patrick (Padraig in Gaelic). In fact, so many Irishmen were named after Saint Patrick that they collectively became known as "Paddys" (not always as a compliment outside of Ireland). "Paddy Wagon" is common parlance, but I don't know if that refers to the Irish cops at the wheel or the Irish drunks locked up in back.

"Turnpike" is really short for "turnpike road," the turnpike itself being the movable barrier of sharpened wooden stakes (pikes) that stopped the horses until a toll was extracted from the driver. Huge numbers of Irish emigrated to the United States throughout the 19th century, leaving their overpopulated and underfed island homeland only to face an uncertain welcome once here. Many potential employers footnoted their "Help Wanted" signs with "N. I. N. A." (No Irish Need Apply!). So, the less skilled immigrants often took the hard jobs no one else wanted, like building railroads and highways.

The rhythmic spirit of my arrangement was inspired by a tape of a backstage mandolin jam with Bill Monroe and Frank Wakefield. I got my melody from Indiana fiddler John Summers, who was a generation older than Monroe. My transcription is based on my 1978 recording, now availble again on the CD reissue *Thompson's Real* (Herringbone Disc ET 101).

A couple of fingering tips:

In the first two measures of the "A "part, hold down the three-string triad position throughout for a full sound. (First finger on 1st and 2nd strings at the 3rd fret - middle finger on 4th fret on the 3rd string). I think of that shape as a partial F chord (shifted up to G).

Half-way through the third measure of the "B" part, when you get to the F note, played with the middle finger on the 3rd fret on the 4th string, simultaneously put down your first finger on the 2nd fret on the 3rd string, and hold that "double-stop" position through most of the next measure, using your pinky to catch the G note on the 5th fret of the 4th string. I find this fingering helps me capture the fiddlistic phrasing of the melody.

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Paddy On The Turnpike

Arranged by Eric Thompson

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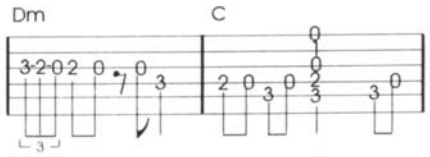

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By Request — David Grier Live: "Nine Pound Hammer"

by Van Hunter

At a recent concert in Albuquerque, David Grier played two of the finest bluegrass guitar solos I have ever heard. After mentioning on Flatpick-L that it had been recorded, I realized I could't keep it to myself. So here it is in black & white and slowed down on the CD. Special thanks goes out to David for giving his permission to do this project and to Matt Flinner for proof reading the TAB.

I have numbered the solos according to how they occurred in the tune. One must remember that these solos were done on the fly as two musical masters where closing out their first set.

I don't think this is something a beginner should tackle but most of it is within the reach of the intermediate to advanced player. Your left hand will need to be in good shape to execute the repetitive slides. Please pay particular attention to the left hand fingerings. They are done to set up for the next phase. The first solo presented here was the fourth that David took on the tune in the show, and the second solo here was the fifth solo in the concert.

Solo #1: When you listen to the recording you will note the timing of the chord changes doesn't appear to fit the structure of the tune. This is the result of Matt and David just listening to each other play and responding to the flow of the moment. I have scored the chord changes in accordance with the true structure of the tune. This works as well and actually sounds really funky. I think David would say, "Either way is cool," I would recommend practicing this with Band-in-a-Box or something similar so you can get a good feel for the timing. It is different. There is a special pulse to way this is played once you get the timing just right. Listen carefully to the recording to catch the rhythmic phrasing. This solo goes out with a very nifty Scott Joplin style lick that can be used almost any bluegrass tune.

Solo # 2 starts out a measure early with an ear-grabbing Django style run. This sounds difficult but is relatively easy to play. Listen carefully to the dynamics of the initial slide. Play the string open then slide up to the 5th fret. If you don't slide much, then sore fingers are ahead. At the end of measure 28 David starts sliding up and down the neck in what I think of as some of his classic trademark sounds. By doing some analysis of where he is starting and where he is going you will gain some insight into his remarkable view of the fretboard. Tablature by itself cannot capture what is going on here. You must listen carefully to get the feel of the motions and the dynamic flow. Don't make it difficult. Anytime I have asked David about a lick he always says, "it's easy, just do this." And he is right; most of it is easy. The easiest and one of the most dynamic slides is in measure 32. This is a C7 chord without the root, sliding to another C7 chord without the root.

Have fun with these solos. Even if you don't learn them all note for note you will certainly walk away with some very cool licks to add to your bag of tricks.

Nine Pound Hammer

Arranged by David Grier
Transcribed by Van Hunter

Capo 2

Nine Pound Hammer (con't)

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THE O-ZONE

by Orrin Star

Arkansas Traveller— A Chestnut Revisited

Certain tunes become so well known that they are actually forgotten about. People OD on them and simply stop considering them—until somebody comes along and makes you hear them anew.

I recently experienced this listening to fiddler Ed Neff's version of "Arkansas Traveller" (on *Bluegrass from the Gold Country*, The Vern Williams Band, Rounder CD 0131). Recorded in 1981, it breathes new life into this old chestnut with:

- a big syncopation on the first note (just ahead of the measure)
- several unexpected melodic turns
- a rhythmic drive that is positively old-timey

I have transcribed the first two solos just as they appear on the record. Not only do they work beautifully on the guitar, but they also include fingerings and intervals that you might not normally consider.

Ed Neff lives in Petaluma, CA, and fiddles full-time. "Arkansas" was one of the first fiddle tunes he ever learned. After hearing his version Vern Williams told him "I never liked that song till I heard you play it."

(Vern seemed to have a knack for reviving familiar tunes with fresh readings: on the forementioned CD are cool versions of "Oh Susannah" and "Old Black Joe." I can relate: at Winfield in '76 one of the four tunes I played was "Old Joe Clark.")

Orrin Star has been performing professionally since the early 1970s. His musical history includes three bluegrass bands, a summer with banjo great Bill Keith, and eight years in a duo with Gary Mehalick. In 1976 he won the National Flatpicking Championship in Winfield, Kansas.

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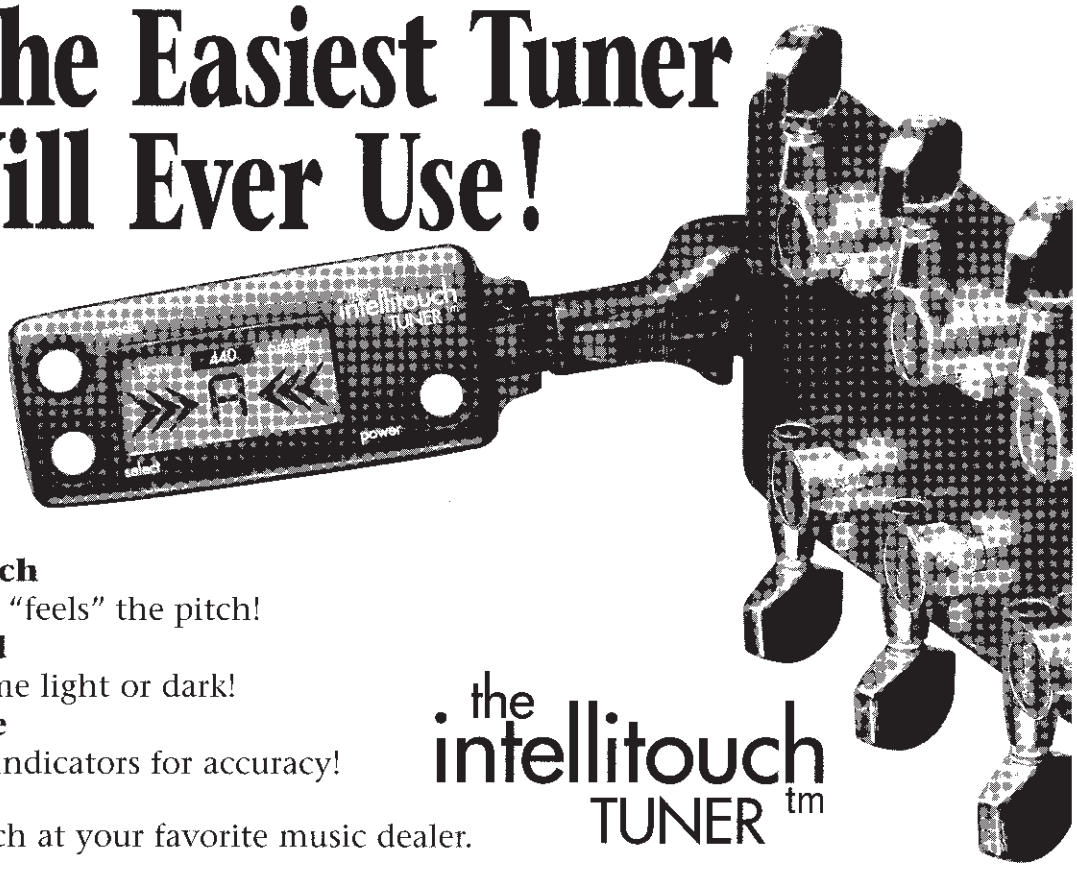

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Arkansas Traveler

Arranged by Ed Neff
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Swinging with "The Sheik of Araby"

by Dix Bruce

Just about every one of my intermediate and advanced acoustic guitar students wants to learn "swing" or "jazz" chords. The first thing I tell them is that there is no such thing as a "swing" or "jazz" chord. A chord is a chord. There are certain chords (sixes, nines, major seven, minor sevens, etc.) that show up more often in swing and jazz music than in rock or bluegrass and these chords are played with a characteristic guitar rhythm or "comp" that gives the music its groove. For the most part, these chords are played in closed positions, with no open strings. The initial learning curve can seem steep at first but the payoff is that once learned, the chords are moveable all over the fingerboard.

I've narrowed the preliminary study of this style of rhythm playing down to two elements: 1) the chords themselves; and 2) the rhythm "comp." In this column we'll learn a handful (so to speak!) of closed position chords, apply them to a classic Jazz Age song, "The Sheik of Araby," and briefly discuss the rhythmic guitar comp that swing and jazz guitarists use.

"The Sheik of Araby" has been a special favorite of mine since I first heard the Jim Kweskin Jug Band's wonderful arrangement about thirty years ago. The song itself is from 1921 and comes from an era when Americans were thirsty to discover new and exotic cultures through books, movies, and popular song. For awhile, Hawaii was all the rage. For a time native Americans were celebrated in story and song. But in the early twenties, middle eastern themes and characters reigned supreme. Baghdad, Cairo, and all things associated with the Arab world were celebrated and explored for their exotic and erotic possibilities. (See cover of original "Sheik" sheet music.) Even today, people who have never seen him in the movie know the dark eyed Rudolph Valentino as the mysterious "Sheik." The song "The Sheik of Araby" was a huge hit and has remained a favorite in the repertoires of jazz and swing bands since the 1920s.

You may be familiar with it from the playing of Clarence White and the Kentucky Colonels during the 1960s. Clarence made it into a showpiece that highlighted some of his hottest and most inventive playing. Since that time the song has been adopted by bluegrass, folk, and country players as their own.

Let's look at the song and its chord progression in the context of those swing and jazz bands and learn closed position versions of all the song's chords. I'm sure you'll be familiar with some of them. All are beefy, chunky, hefty chords that will punch sound out from the middle of a rhythm section. A lot of these chords are four string chords where the second or fifth strings aren't played at all.

I learned this chord system from Mel Bay's first book *Mel Bay's Orchestral Chord System for Rhythm and Orchestral Guitar*. It teaches all the important chords, and there are quite a few, in four different positions: with the root of the chord in the bass, the third in the bass, the fifth in the bass, and the seven in the bass. As you memorize where each part of the chord is in a given position, you'll learn how that position can be slightly changed to make a dominant seven chord (for example, a G7) into a minor seven chord (Gm7).

The book was quite an education for me and we'll be using several of those chords on "The Sheik." If you're interested in this great book, the current title is: *Rhythm Guitar Chord System* and it's available for $5.95 plus shipping from Musix, PO Box 231005, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 • email: musix1@aol.com.

These chords opened my ears to new worlds of music and I was so grateful to Mel Bay for his instruction that I sent my original copy of the book to him and asked him to autograph it. As you know, I've been writing books for Mel Bay Publications for over fifteen years but at that time hadn't met Mel. So I sent him the book and he sent it back signed. I opened the cover and read his words: "With great memories and regards. I'm honored to have you on our team. Mel Bay, 5/14/94." Man, I felt great about that! I'm on Mel's team! He's proud of me! Then I looked at the salutation. It read: "To Dick." Took me back down a peg or two.

It's important that you learn the melody and the lyrics, so spend some time on both. Our main mission here is to learn the ten accompaniment chords to the song. Look them over and practice changing from one to the next before you tackle the song. Once you feel somewhat familiar with the chords, play through the song very slowly, preferably along with a metronome. If there's only one chord in the measure, that chord will be played on all four beats. If there are two chords in the measure, each gets two beats.

As you memorize these chords, try to be aware of how they relate to one another and help your hands memorize how the change from one to the other feels. As you study this style of music, you'll learn that these exact changes will be found again and again throughout the repertoire. And, once you learn a closed position chord passage in one key, you can move it easily anywhere on the neck, to any position or key, especially if you've developed hand memory.

For example, G-G#°-Am7-D7, will feel just about the same as Bb-B°-Cm7-F7 or C-C#°-Dm7-G7. So, as soon as you can comfortably play that passage on "The Sheik of Araby" as written in the key of G, try moving it down two frets and start on the F chord. Then move the whole passage up five frets to Bb. Then two more to C. You'll get the most out of these chords if you understand the unlimited potential they offer for different keys and positions. While it will be nice for you to know "The Sheik" in the key of G, it will be infinitely more useful for you to be able to play it, and the thousands of songs with the same or parts of the same chord progression, in several keys.

Let's look briefly at the chords themselves. The G is a garden variety 6-sting barre chord. I learned it years ago from my buddies who played rock & roll. This chord, and all the chords in this article, will be easier to play the lower your string action is. The D7 is a slightly modified version of the familiar C7, played two frets higher on the neck. The G#° is a challenging chord but a cool one. Any note in this chord can name it. So it could also be referred to as an F°, a B°, or a D°. I call it G#° because the G# note is the lowest note of the chord, on the sixth string. We'd identify this chord as one with the G# note is in the bass. Also, if you move this chord form (or any diminished chord forms) up or down three frets, it's the same chord in a different inversion. If you play this same form with your second finger on the seventh, tenth, or thirteenth fret, it's still a G#°, or an F°, a B°, or a D°. Now that's cool!

The Am7 is a very useful form. It's a little difficult at first to mold your third finger to cover those three strings but with work, it'll come. The Bm7 is the same chord two frets higher up the neck. The Bb° is the same form

as the G#°, but obviously with a different root and at a different fret position. The C7 is the same form as the D7. The B7 form is another wonderfully useful dominant seven form that shows up again when you play the A7.

The small letters or numbers under the chord diagrams tell what part of the chord that particular fretted note supplies. "r" means root, "5" means the fifth, etc. An "x" tells you not to play that string at all. Now, this takes a little coordination in your fretting hand. The trick is to have your fingers cleanly fret the notes / strings that you want to sound while muting the notes / strings that you don't want to sound. You'll have to do some serious finger wiggling.

The "comp" is a difficult thing to describe on paper. In fact, I could write pages and pages and it wouldn't be as descriptive or accurate as just playing it for you for a minute or two. I highly recommend that you get the accompanying CD that's available with every issue of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*. On this issue's CD I play "The Sheik" at two speeds and demonstrate the comp.

You should also listen to current or vintage swing bands that feature acoustic guitar rhythm. Freddie Green with Count Basie is great, especially if you can find one of the recordings where his rhythm playing is prominent in the mix. I also like Charlie Christian's brief rhythm work (though he played electric) that you can hear sporadically on recordings of the Benny Goodman Sextet.

Two of my favorite though somewhat unlikely examples of good comping come from Bobby Darin hits of the early 1960s. Check out "Beyond the Sea" and "Mack the Knife." Both have big band backup with a very audible rhythm guitar part that swings and grooves all the way through next Tuesday.

If you'd like to hear me playing this type of rhythm in a modern string swing rhythm section, check out my *BackUP TRAX: Swing and Jazz* or my *Tuxedo Blues: String Swing & Jazz*. *BackUP TRAX* are rhythm section CD/book sets were we supply the rhythm and you supply all the leads and solos. The guitar is mixed to one side so you can easily isolate it, hear the comp, and play along practicing changing chords and grooving. The latter is a collection of instrumentals and vocals with the same basic rhythm section: me on guitar; Bob Alekno on mandolin; Dave Balakrishnan on violin; and Mike Wollenberg on bass.

If you want to hear and play along with the same basic type of rhythm in a more traditional jazz band context (piano, bass, drums, guitar, etc.) I suggest my *BackUP TRAX: Early Jazz & Hot Tunes* and *BackUP TRAX: Traditional Jazz & Dixieland*. Again, both are book / CD sets where you listen to the CD and play along and again, the rhythm guitar is isolated on one side for easy access. (All are available from Musix, address above.)

All the chords in "The Sheik of Araby" are closed position chords with no open strings. In addition to being moveable all over the neck (e.g. learn one position and you can play eleven different chords with it), you can control how long a strum rings by simply loosening your fretting hand grip. In this way you can accent certain beats in the measure while keeping your strumming hand playing basically the same four beats. Loosen your grip on beats two and four to cut off the sound and let beats one and three ring out more. You get kind of a "chum-chuk, chum-chuk" thing happening.

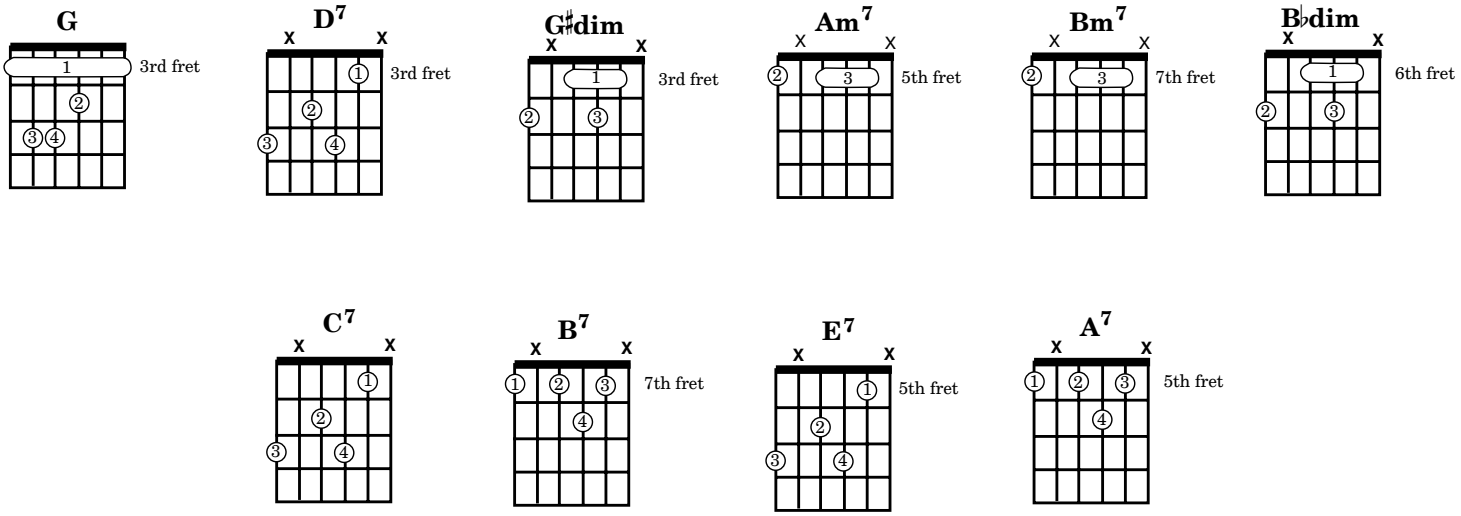
It's important to develop this basic comp into a swinging groove that inspires your fellow players and your audience. If you're playing with other guitarists, a bass player, or drummer, etc., you want to work on the groove with them to create something that cooks. I can't stress how important it is to listen to good guitar players and hear how they accent strums and capture the light lilting rhythm that makes this style tick.

If you're interested in more specific study of this rhythmic style, I have a new video on the subject that is due for release about the time you read this. It's called "Basic Swing Guitar Rhythm" from Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop. We work with chords and comping on ten great swing and jazz standards. The video also features my pal the phenomenal Jeremy Cohen playing hot fiddle leads while I back him up. It's available from Musix.

Good luck, keep swinging, but don't get above your raisin.' Mother Maybelle is still the queen of the guitar in my book!

Dix Bruce is a musician and writer from the San Francisco Bay Area. Mel Bay has just released Bruce's "Great Mandolin Pickin' Tunes" book and CD set of old time, jazz, Irish, Italian, classical, and more. The book / CD set sells for $5.95 plus shipping. Bay has also released two great collections Bruce worked on entitled "2000 Flatpicking: Solos by the World's Finest Flatpicking Guitarists." and "2000 Mandolin: Solos by the World's Finest Mandolinists." Each book (over 200 pages) includes two CDs of the work of Rice, Crary, Grier, Watson, Nygaard, Blake, Bruce, Nunally, Barenberg, and more (Flatpicking book). Each book / 2CD set sells for $29.95 plus shipping. For details and availability contact Musix, PO Box 231005, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 • email: musix1@aol.com or call toll-free: 877-219-0441. Bruce has just completed a book for Mel Bay Publication entitled "How to Use the Capo, How to Transpose, and How the Nashville Number System Works." It will be available in Fall 2000.

Sheik of Araby Chord Charts



The Sheik of Araby

Arranged by Dix Bruce

G G♯dim Am7 D7 Am7 D7
I'm the sheik of Ar a by, _ your love be longs to
7
G Bm7 B♭dim Am7 D7
me. _ At night, when you're a sleep, _ in
13
Am7 D7 G G♯dim Am7 D7 G G♯dim
to your tent I'll creep. _ The stars that shine a
19
Am7 D7 Am7 D7 C7 B7 E7
bove, _ will light our way to love, _ you'll rule this
26
A7 Am7 D7 G
land with me, _ the sheik of Ar a - by. _
T
A
B

Music Theory: Mastering the Fingerboard

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by Michel A. Maddux

Flowers of Edinburgh

One of the finest musicians that I know, and the inspiration for the arrangement included below, is Randy Zombola. Combining Irish, American, Brazilian, Jazz, and contemporary influences, his albums are an interesting and eclectic mix of styles. He is the only musician that I know that has featured duct tape as part of his music.

Randy, who happens to have a PhD in Physics, is a slim, bearded, closet musician. By day, nuclear physics; by night, an award-winning hammered dulcimer player, including a first place finish in 1988 in the National Hammered Dulcimer contest at Winfield, Kansas.

I first met Randy around 1985 when I happened to drop by the Friday night Irish music sessions at the Margarita at Pine Creek in Colorado Springs. His band, at that time called the "Blarney Pilgrim," had two fiddles, guitar, and hammered dulcimer. One of the tunes they did that caught my ear was the "Flowers of Edinburgh." I liked the tune enough to learn it, and the transcription below is pretty close to the way that Randy and I recorded it on my 1997 release "Ol Banjo."

This arrangement was featured in the National Flatpicking Championships at Winfield, minus the hammered dulcimer break.

You can also hear this tune in the background of the Michael Caine movie "The Fourth Protocol," performed by a German traditional "oom-pah" band. See if you can catch it in the opening scene played on tuba and accordian.

After nearly 20 years, Randy is still playing the first Friday night of each month. I sit in with him most of the time. Stop in and say howdy when you are in Colorado Springs, we will be at the Margarita at Pine Creek.

Notes on the arrangement: This tune has an extended, free form intro. After that, the tune is a regular AABB form in G. I've tabbed out the first and fourth guitar breaks pretty closely to the way that they appear on the CD. On the second break, the B section, 4th measure last note, play the B note on second string A, 2nd fret, slide up to 7th fret. 8th measure, play the 9th fret, third string B, slide back down to the open G. For this slide, you release the D string at about the third fret and play the G string open.

About the Author:

Mike Maddux has been flatpicking since 1981. He performs regularly in Colorado Springs and the western United States with his wife Bertye, and "The Mike and Bertye Maddux Band." In 1995 he was awarded third place honors at the prestigious National Flatpicking Championship in Winfield, Kansas. His CD, "OL Banjo", is available through Flatpicking Guitar Magazine. *Please contact him with questions or comments in care of this magazine.*

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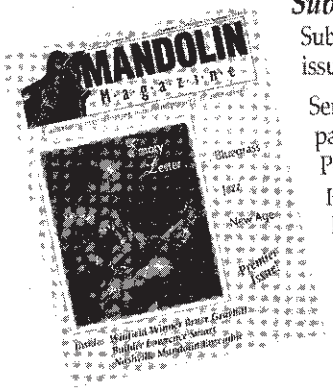

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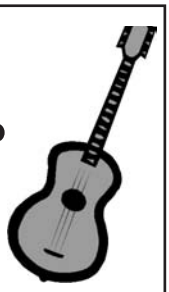


I'll Fly Away

Initial discussions about beginning a "Gospel Guitar" column focused on the idea that perhaps such a column should feature a fair amount of Carter style picking. Although that's been true so far to some extent with the songs in the first two columns ("Amazing Grace" and "Blessed Assurance"), the gospel song this time around, "I'll Fly Away", is played almost exclusively in Carter style.

"I'll Fly Away" is a favorite at bluegrass and country music gatherings, due to its easy, no frills, low-density melody that's accessible to all stringed instruments (particularly guitar and banjo), and because of its sing-along potential. It's arranged here in the key of C, the favorite setting for Carter style players, with a lot of time spent in the "C" position. I usually play it in the key of G, capoed at the 7th fret, because not only do banjo players like you better that way - at least the G-driven ones, but the bright "music box" effect of the setting lends itself to the song's positive message. The "no-frills" label definitely applies to the arrangement here as well. Except for a couple of Doc Watson "echoes" here and there, there's nothing particularly fancy happening in either the lead arrangement or chord progression - just good old C, G, and F chords.

Now, some would argue that it's probably stretching it a bit to include F chords in the "good" category. Most of us don't have the same warm, fuzzy feelings toward them as for others because being a little tougher to hold down, they're often cause for guitarists to avoid the key of C altogether. If you've never had problems with F chords, disregard what follows, but if you have, you may share that sentiment after seeing what's involved here. Measures 6, 7, 22, and 23 require a full six-string F chord that's not barred. That's because of the descending notes on the fifth string that end measures 7 and 23. While playing those notes, the ideal is to allow as much of the F chord to ring or sustain as possible. The only way to accommodate all of that then is to wrap your thumb around the sixth string 1st fret in good (there's that word again) old country style fashion, and give thanks that you're playing a guitar with a neck narrower than that of a classical.

A word or two is in order regarding the substitute measures at the end of the arrangement. The first two consist of cross picking and lend a little more "drama" to the third and fourth measures of the chorus (measures 20 and 21), and the second two, substituting for measures 32 and 33, are just another way to end your break and return to the verse. Other than for an "upside down" C9th chord effect in measure 21 which just involves holding a C chord with the second string 3rd fret added and the fourth string kept open, and calling your attention to some more cross picking in measure 28, there's not a lot more to say about the piece, except to hope you can put it to good use.

Diminished 7th Chords

That being said, perhaps there's room left over here for another topic. So many readers wrote to request chord forms for Amazing Grace from the first column, and to inquire about diminished 7th chords, that some sort of explanation is in order.

Diminished 7ths are written with a little "°" which symbolizes the term "diminished", such as in F°7, which is stated as; "F diminished 7th". For the most part, the symbol is a jazz idea, a form in which diminisheds are played so frequently that writer's cramp would result in having to write the chord names out in full. These days, diminisheds are also abbreviated as "dim" in various sheet music and books, such as in Fdim7.

Diminished Chord Analysis: To delve a little deeper into diminished 7th chords, first, they're just expansions of "regular" diminished chords. As to what those are, they're 3-note (triad) chords, just like majors and minors, which are based upon the first, third, and fifth notes of a major (do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do) scale. Thinking in those terms, that gives us "do,""mi," and "so," just as in a major chord. The difference is that the third and fifth (mi and so) are "flatted" or "diminished" - one being a synonym of the other. In guitar terms, that just means both notes are lowered one fret.

In case that sounds like language from a distant planet, here's an example: Constructing a G major chord involves extracting the first, third, and fifth notes (stated as 1-3-5), from the G scale (G-A-B-C-D-E-F#-G) which gives us G-B-D. For a G diminished, however, flatting the third and fifth notes of the G scale (stated as 1-3b-5b) leaves us with G-Bb-Db. What all that amounts to is illustrated in the two chord diagrams in Figure 1. The chord on the left is G and the one on the right is G diminished. Notice that the notes on the second and third strings (3rd and 4th frets respectively) have been lowered one fret.

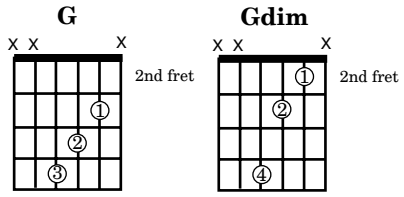


Figure 1

But here's where it gets interesting. One of the premises of jazz is that almost all chords contain a minimum of four different notes. The fourth note added to a diminished is the 7th. Easy enough, but now we have to flat it, just like the third and fifth giving us 1-3b-5b-7b. Except we're not through yet. That only results in something called a "half diminished 7th" chord. To get what we're really after - chords we're more likely to think of as diminished 7ths (such as F07), we have to flat the 7th again, giving us 1-3b-5b-7bb. That's called a "full diminished 7th", which is something of a misnomer because flatting the 7th twice results in a 6th.

Colors, Textures, and Moods: In the same way musicians sometimes think of chords in terms of colors and textures, it's also helpful to think of them in terms of moods, as in people moods. In that vein, you might think of major chords as happy, and minor chords as sad. In a way, they're like squirrels - they do a good job of being squirrels, and really don't care to be anything else. There's other classes of chords, however, that seem to have identity problems.

Garden variety 7th chords such as G7 and D7 harbor a certain amount of anxiety. That's because they'd rather be something else, which is enough to make anyone tense. Along those

same lines but to a greater degree, diminished 7th chords, depending on their context, exhibit so much anxiety, they're in need of professional help. They're great tension-producing chords because they're rootless. They have no home and they're begging for resolution to become whatever chord is next. As you'll see in a bit, they have so many choices about what to become, they're not the least bit fussy.

Just in case you've come to the conclusion that a really spooky person is writing this, you're right, but that's besides the point. It does seem strange to think of chords in such ways, but armed with the knowledge that music can reflect and change the moods people have, composers and arrangers have learned to play us just like instruments through a series of tension and release states. That's a good definition of much of music, and what it amounts to in a lot of cases is using unstable chords (such as diminisheds) to set up "tense" moments which are followed by "squirrel" chords (such as majors and minors) which create tension release through resolution to the next chord.

How diminished 7th Chords are Used:

To discuss how diminished 7ths are used, one must first have one to use. Guitars, particularly in standard tuning, offer many different diminished 7th chord shapes. Some are not very user friendly, however, and many are suitable only for lead playing. The focus here is primarily on rhythm chord forms, because that's the way diminished 7ths originally popped up back in "Amazing Grace" in the first column.

When it comes to rhythm chords, by definition, they should contain a bass note or two, and the movable form shown at the left in Figure 2 certainly qualifies via the note on the sixth string. The form is the first choice for most jazz guitarists, and even if you use diminished 7ths only fleetingly, it should definitely be included in your rhythm chord repertoire as well. Compare it to the form on the right. It's essentially the same chord except it's flipped over - that is, the note on the sixth string in the form on the left is now on the first string. As to the form on the right, it works well for lead playing, but it should be avoided for rhythm playing because of the missing bass note.

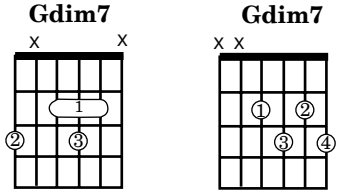


Figure 2

Getting back to the form on the left, notice that holding it requires a partial barre across the second, third, and fourth strings. Notice also that the first and fifth strings are blocked or muffled, just like the G6 form discussed in the Amazing Grace column, and in previous columns of Joe Carr's. For the form to be movable up and down the neck, and in order to strum all the strings without worrying about hitting what you're aiming at, blocking those strings is a must.

Discussing the many uses of diminished 7ths could fill a book, but now that we have a chord form to move around, we can at least make a bit of a dent. First, all that flatting business results in a symmetrical chord, that is, one in which the note relationships are based on a step-and-a-half pattern - the same as three frets to us. With that information, we can conjure up countless variations of diminished 7th scales, but that's a topic best left for another time.

That symmetry has another effect though, and here's where we get to the "rootless" part. It means that any diminished chord form can have as many as four different names - one for each note in the chord. Now, if you don't know the names of the notes on lower neck, you'll have to trust me on this but the notes in Figure 2 (either form) are G, Db, Bb, and E. Therefore, either form can be a G diminished 7th, a Db diminished 7th, a Bb diminished 7th, or an E diminished 7th. It's a bit awkward to call every diminished 7th form four different names, however, so as a matter of convenience, we assign names based on top or bottom notes. Therefore, the forms in Figure 2 are G diminished 7ths - the bottom note is G in the form on the left, and the top note is G in the form on the right.

Here's another effect of diminished 7th symmetry: because of the step- and-a-half, or 3-fret, relationship between notes, any diminished 7th form can be moved up or down the neck three frets, thereby producing the same chord. Try it for yourself. Move the form in Figure 2 up three frets and listen to the sound. Although its pitch is higher, it really is the same chord, except the notes are inverted or rescrambled. As shown in the form on the left, the notes beginning with the second string are Db, Bb, E, and G. Moving the form up three frets results in E, Db, G, and Bb - the same chord! If you move the form three frets higher, you'll again have the same chord with the same four notes rescrambled, and so on. As to the good in all that, it has to do with proximity. If you're in the vicinity of the 8th fret, say, and the next chord is a G diminished 7th, it doesn't make much sense to go all the way down the neck to the form in Figure 2, when the same chord can be had right next door.

Let's get back to how diminished 7ths sound like they're suffering from the effects of a whole pot of caffeinated coffee, and how they really wish to be something else. Because diminished 7ths contain four different notes, they can resolve eight different ways - a half step up or down. For example, taking G diminished 7th in Figure 2 again, the note on the second string is Db. A half step down from Db is C, and a half step up from Db is D. Therefore, the form could resolve half a step down to any chord with a C note. Some resolutions sound better or more dramatic than others, but a couple you may wish to try are Gdim7 to F and Gdim7 to Dm7. Resolving upward to chords with D notes, ones to try are Gdim7 to D, Gdim7 to Bm, and the one most commonly heard in gospel music, Gdim7 to G.

All of the examples are changes you'll encounter not only in gospel music, but in jazz, and these days, in country and pop. Here's where it gets boggling though. As mentioned, the other three notes in the chord are also capable of upward/downward resolution, which opens up additional possibilities. It's just personal opinion but I don't believe anyone can exhaust or explore all of those possibilities in a musical lifetime.

Finally, and here's where it gets Boggling with a capital B, diminished 7ths go by other names as well, at least amongst us guitarists. Those other names - really jazz thoughts more than anything, are 7ths with flatted 9ths, and are abbreviated as 7b9 or 7-9. Unlike diminished 7th chords, which consist of four notes, any chord that has a ninth in it, (except chords such as Cadd9, etc.), is really a five-note chord. We can get away with such dual thinking because we're limited by six strings and five fingers (thumbs count too), which leads to a tendency to live in a world of partial chords - to learn which notes we can live without, in other words. Therefore, to us, a G diminished 7th is also a C7b9, and as you may have guessed, the four-name idea applies here as well. In addition to C7b9, a G diminished 7th can also be thought of as a Gb7b9, an Eb7b9, and an A7b9.

Enough already. It's best to end this by saying that while gospel music contains many instances of diminished 7th chord passages, in keeping with the cardinal virtue of charity, the time spent on such chords in gospel music is short, with no wish to prolong the chord's misery in wishing to become something else.

Oh...one more thing. In the last issue, I forgot to mention that if you're in need of chord forms for "Blessed Assurance," just write to me care of LeWalt Publishing, 4950 East 20th Ave, Post Falls, Idaho, 83854 (U.S.A.), and I'll send them free of charge (no need to include a SASE).

I'll Fly Away

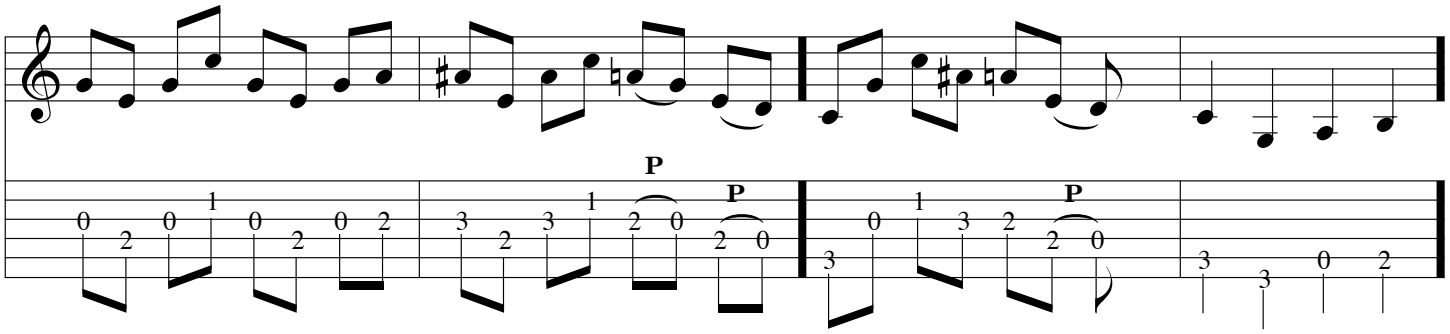
Arranged by Harold Streeter

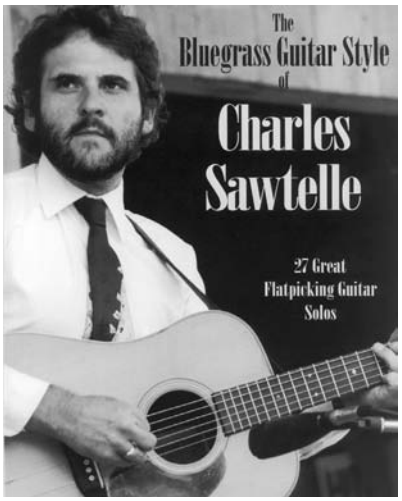
I'll Fly Away (con't)

Substitute Measures

Substitute for Measures 20 and 21

Substitute for Measures 33 and 34





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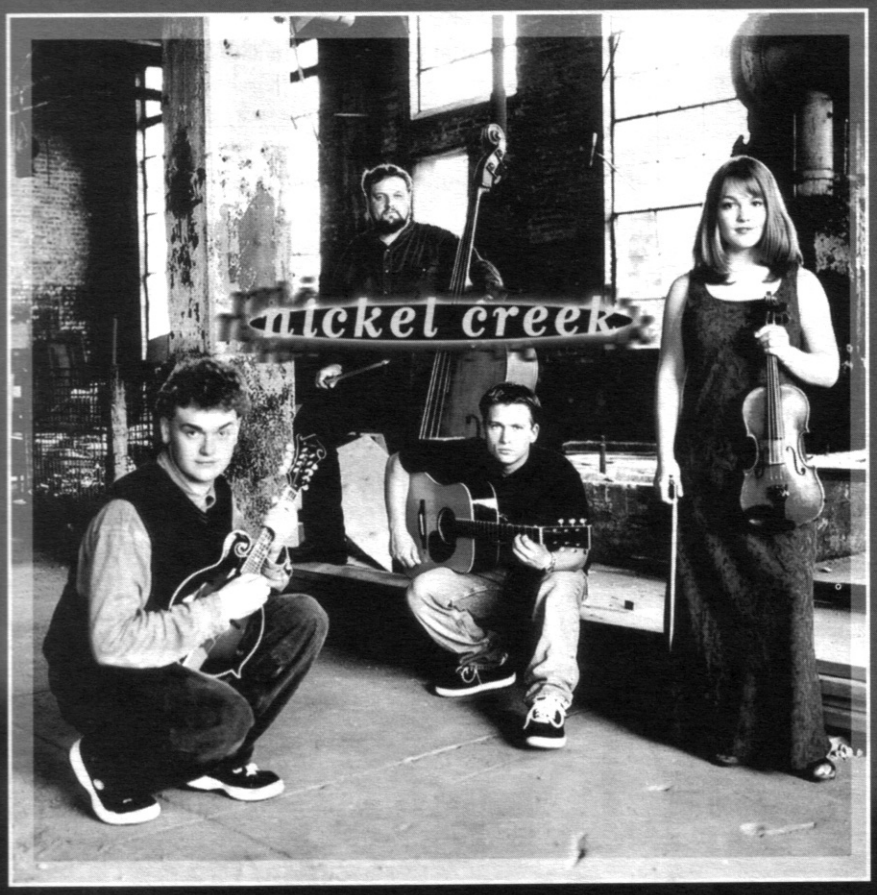

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On The Web

David Dugas

Welcome to On the Web! This month we'll focus mainly on guitar builder's, but I will also mention a few other places to visit.

Here's a neat web radio site sent to me by my friends Bo and Gus (thank's guys!): www.live365.com

Worried about taking your Brazilian Rosewood abroad? Here's a link to the Fed site with answers for you on this question and many others: http://international.fws.gov/public/cpc.pdf

Now on to my favorite subject, Geetar Builders! <g>

I've seen a fairly comprehensive listing of nylon/classical guitar builders, but not one for steel string builders. If you know of one (besides the list at www.guitarnotes.com) let me know. If there isn't one for steel string builders, I'll start compiling one and keep it on my web site (www.larp.com/ddugas).

Here's a partial list of the steel string builders I'm currently aware of (I'll add more in future columns):

- www.martinguitars.com (Martin Guitars)
- www.collingsguitars.com (Collings Guitars)
- www.santacruzguitar.com (Santa Cruz Guitar Company)
- www.lucasguitars.com (Lucas Custom Instruments)
- www.walkerguitars.com (Walker Guitars) www.dudenbostel.com (Dudenbostel Guitars)
- www.larp.com/ddugas (for the "Unofficial Collings Clarence White" web site - sorry, I couldn't resist! CW's are my personal fav-o-rite geetars!)
- www.goodallguitars.com (Goodall Guitars)
- www.manzer.com (Manzer Guitars)
- www.griffinguitars.com (Ronnie Griffin Guitars in Waycross, GA - the site should be up soon)
- www.dnj.com/gallagher/index.html (Gallagher Guitars)
- www.hoffmanguitars.com/ (Hoffman Guitars)
- www.monteleone.net (Monteleone Instruments)
- www.merrillguitar.com (Merrill Guitars)

The links mentioned in this column and all previous On the Web columns are now online at my web site: www.larp.com/ddugas/ontheweb.htm.

That's it for this installment of On the Web. As always, if you find a cool and useful site on the web please forward it to me at ddugas@mindspring.com.

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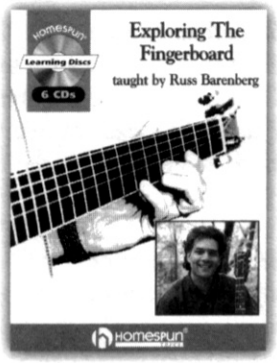

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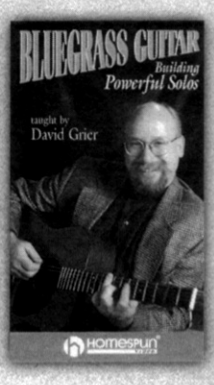

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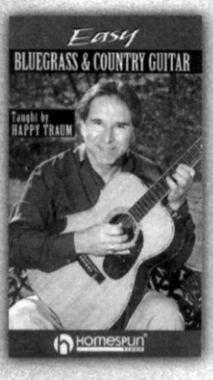

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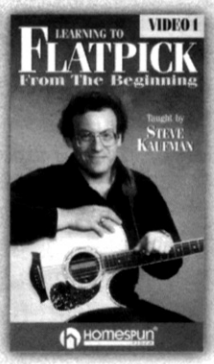

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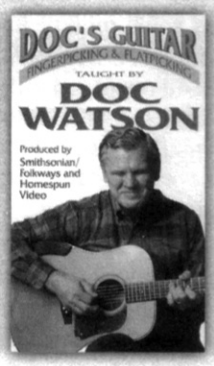

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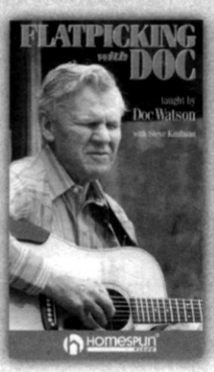

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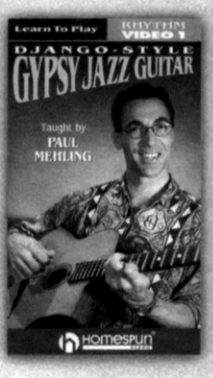

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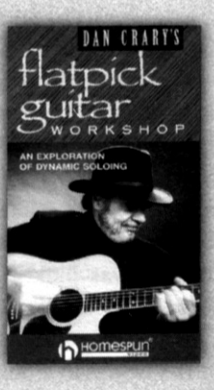

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PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES

by Adam Granger

BACK TO THE EMERALD ISLE

Hello, pickers, one and all! This time, we return to Ireland to plunder a couple of tunes from its huge reserve. There are so many thousands of Irish tunes that they can spare us a couple. In fact, they probably won't even notice they're missing.

I would suggest, as a means of covering our larcenous tracks, that we simply retitle these tunes (perhaps to something old-timey, like *Spider Bit the Skunk*), but *McGibbney's Fancy* and *Jackson's* wear their Irish lineage like a mogul wears spats. Nossir. There will be no re-branding of these little trans-Atlantic dogies.

Let us, therefore, welcome them to America and give them the royal flatpick treatment; the tuning key to the city, as it were.

Let's start by noting these tunes' similarities:

•Both have the same essential melodic structure: they hang on the E minor scale, which is the same as the G scale, only starting in a different place (his is because E minor is the relative minor of the key of G, but that's another column).

•They share essentially the same progression. I say "essentially" because there are some differences—and they are important ones to know and understand—but they both follow an Em-D theme that is very common in Irish music. Tunes with this progression also appear in A minor and G minor, but E minor is far and away the most fecund.

I link these two tunes not in spite of, but *because of*, their similarities. I sometimes perform these in a medley, and it works pretty well: tunesmiths appreciate the fine distinctions between the two, and non-tunesmiths find the olio sort of mesmerizing (understanding, of course, the fine line between "mesmerizing" and "boring").

READING *EASY-TAB*

Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, Easytab uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There are a total of eight notes and rests

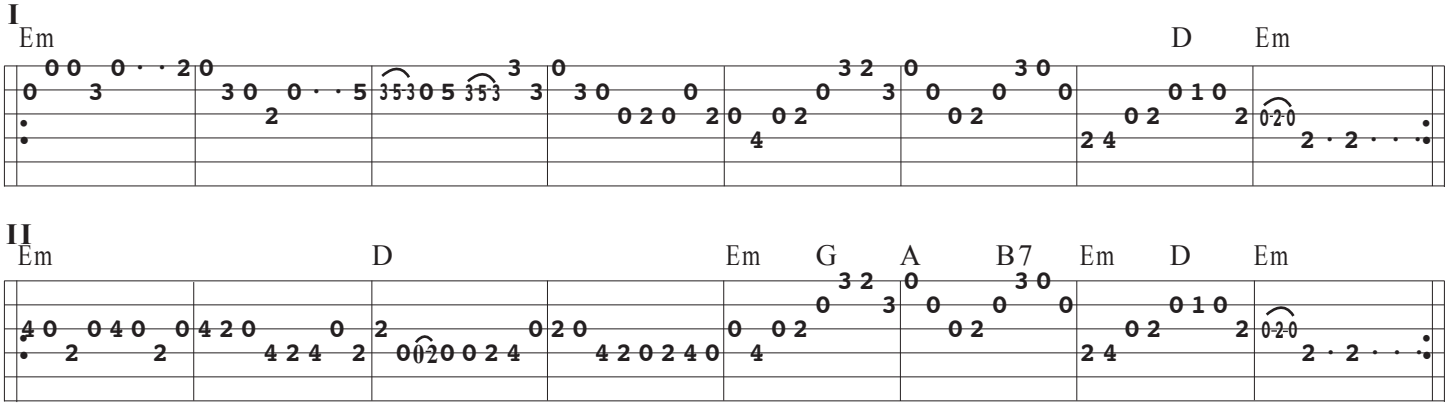
FOR BEGINNERS

Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in synch", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-

Okay, kids, here's your assignment: Learn these tunes. Learn them carefully and well, so you play them correctly and so you don't confuse the two. Learn their progressions. There is an especially high risk of intermingling and confusion on the tags and sub-tags (Lost? See *FGM*, V1, N5.) Okay. We're done. Have at it. Don't just sit there; go get your guitar. I'll wait for you. . .

McGIBBNEY'S FANCY

KEY: Em



Two things about this bad boy: First, the left hand needs to move between the second and third positions throughout. You definitely want to be in third for the two hammer-on pull-offs, because you can then play them with your first and third fingers. Mind you, you *should* be able to play a figure like that with the second and fourth fingers, but, once you've established that ability, I recommend the easier and stronger first and third fingers.

The other thing to watch for, in both tunes, is pick direction: Them crazy hammer-ons and pull-offs make for some gnarly right-hand hijinks. Just remember that *hopos* (hammer-on pull-offs) have a two-note value and hammer-ons and pull-offs separately have a one note value, and you need to adjust your pick direction accordingly. In the third measure, then, the hopos are picked down, and the first notes after them are too, because the hopos equal two notes in length. Note also that the hammer-on in the third measure of the second part is followed by an upstroke. BONUS TIP: Flatten your index finger to catch the third-fret E-string note in that same measure.

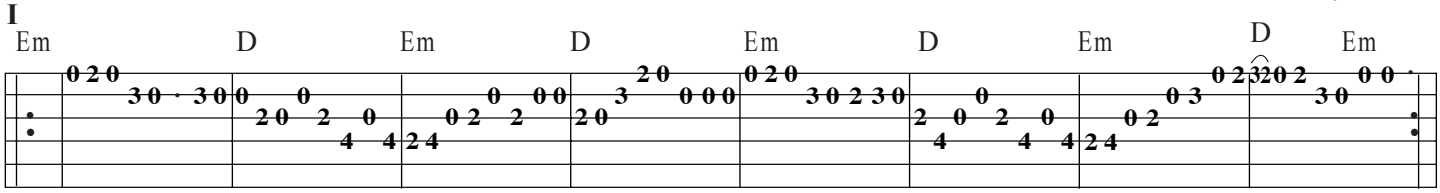
On to the next emigre. In case you're asking, "*Jackson's* what", it's *Jackson's* Reel. Irish tunes are often titled with the object of the possessive understood. Understand? Good.

Jackson's, as mentioned earlier, tracks very much like *McGibbney's Fancy*: lots of 0's, 2's and 3's. Unlike *McGibbney's*, though, where we had hopos in addition to separate hammer-ons and pull-offs, here we are hopoless (the resemblance of this word to "hopeless" is purely coincidental). Oh, and remember pick direction: in the last measure of the first part, for example, you'll pick the pull-off down and the open string after it up, and so on.

JACKSON'S

KEY: Em

I



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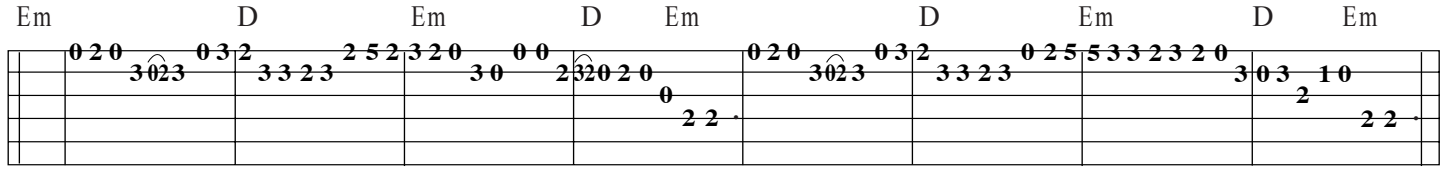

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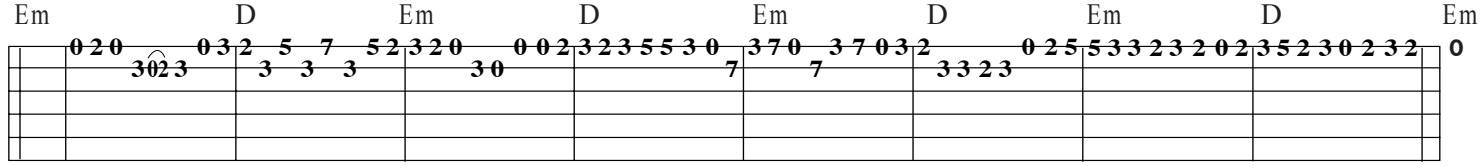
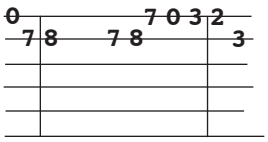


Did you play through *Jackson's*, or did you just skip down to see what I was going to say next? If you played it, you no doubt noticed the challenging and perhaps irritating fifth measure in the third part. This is a stretch, in more ways than one. The third fret notes are played by the index finger and the seventh by the fourth finger.

For those who haven't been practicing their chromatic scale (*FGM*, V2, N1) or who *truly* have small hands (in italics because I run into lots of people who *think* they can't make left-hand reaches because their hands are congenitally small, when the real reason is that they haven't trained and stretched out their left hands), I offer this alternative fretting:



"That's much easier, Adam," I hear you say, somewhat grumpily. Yes it is, but if you wanted easy you'd still be strumming *Stewball* with your thumb. Here's the deal:

It's very common for fiddle tunes to have as their highest note the third or fifth tone of the key scale. The fifth in E minor is the same note as the third in G, *apropos* of our earlier mention of relative minor scales. Whatever we call it, this note is on the seventh fret of the high E string. So anyway, this high note is almost invariably played only once or twice, whereupon the melody returns to lower regions. When we play up the neck, the intonation and general sound of the note change. To have to play entire phrases with this different sound just because we can't make a 5 fret reach seems, well, lazy. Slothful. Indolent. Slack-jawed.

Let me emphasize that this is a difficult passage. If I can play this phrase cleanly, I'm having a good day, and I promptly run out to buy a lottery ticket and play in the traffic.

Remember, folks: it is this sort of challenge that makes us better guitarists.

Of third parts and judgment calls. . .

Jackson's presents an interesting dilemma, *re* fiddle tune parts. You'll remember from past columns that fiddle tunes usually have two repeated eight-bar parts, for a total of 32 bars. This is so common that we refer to a 32-bar tune as a standard, straight or square tune.

Jackson's looks normal: it has a total of 32 bars, but it doesn't follow the standard tune format.

We can describe the structure of this tune either as having a standard first part and non-repeated eight bar second and third parts or as having a standard first part and a 16-bar nonrepeated second part.

This is a judgment call, and the basis for decision should lie in the melody. I could see this tune being described either way; I decided that the second and third lines were sufficiently different (especially in their second halves) to be considered separate parts.

It doesn't really matter, mind you, because, as my uncle Cletus used to say, the cat gets washed no matter which bucket you dump it in. . .

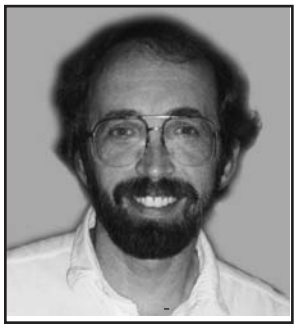
Adam Granger is a fifty-year-old Leo who collects miniature locks and doesn't mind people talking on cell phones in restaurants (although he finds it amusing). He grew up next to two sorority houses in Norman, Oklahoma. Fortunately, he was a well-behaved boy. (He still is.)

Adam does workshops and music camps around the country, performs, writes and has a pretty good driving record. He doesn't have pets; he can't even remember to keep his guitars humidified. Adam is distantly related to Robert Fulton and dislikes canned laughter, although he likes most other canned things. He was eighteen years old during the Summer of Love, and he didn't. (For those youngsters out there: The Sixties weren't as easy, or as fun, as they looked.)

Exploring Bluegrass Guitar

Ignorance is Bliss?

by Steve Pottier



Recently the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran an article by *New York Times* writer Erica Goode with the title "Incompetent People Really Have No Clue, Studies Find." The main point of the article was that incompetent people do not know that they are incompetent, and that the reason for this is that the skills required for competence often are the same skills necessary to recognize competence.

You've probably seen the guy in the jam that thought he was the next Tony Rice, but you wished he could just keep time. Or Mr. Rhythm who played so loud you couldn't hear the banjo, and anyway, was he playing reggae or bluegrass? Of course, we all go through periods like this (don't we?), but the trick is to go "through" them and not get stuck, blissfully unaware. How can you avoid being that Mr. Rhythm or faux TR? What can you do to move to the next level, to be a little more musically competent? I believe that it all starts with awareness. This consists of careful listening with attention to detail, cultivation of musical taste, and feedback. You must actively seek all three.

A common tendency among players is to learn with the "impressionistic" approach. Sometimes it is justified as the "folk process" or "I want to do it my way." What it means is that there is a general impression of the song or tune, you learn the general contours of the melody, you put the G run in where it "usually" goes and so on. Nothing wrong with this, those justifications are valid, but by "rounding off" you rob yourself of an opportunity to train your ear, to hear more than you hear at first listening. Ron Block (guitar/banjo player for Alison Krauss) says he'll go back and listen to a song many times, listening for specific instruments, just to see how the band puts it all together. His attention to those details has made him one of the best musicians in bluegrass.

When you first start playing and listening to records, you may not be able to pick out the guitar rhythm or hear the chord changes. You can learn to do this—I did! Pick out a song you already know the changes to, and the key. Get another musician to help you, then listen for the changes, listen for the obvious runs, and try to follow the sound of the guitar back into the depth of the mix. Then get someone to suggest a song with similar changes and do it again—and again. It gets easier. All along, you're forcing your ear to pay attention to details. You'll find you hear more and more. I've been listening to Bill Monroe for more than 30 years, and I can still listen with my friend (ex-Bluegrass Boy) Sandy Rothman and hear things I didn't hear before. Every time you listen you bring your entire musical history of listening with you, and it colors what you hear. I like listening with Sandy for another reason—he is a more experienced musician, and he will often hear things that my ears skip over, or a turn in the melody that I have "rounded off." If you have such a friend, take advantage of it to talk about music. Talk about what you like and dislike in bands, in a song. Try to discuss it in detail—"his tone was terrible through the phrase" or "he missed the melody there." You're challenging each other to listen closer.

Years ago, I spent hours and hours transcribing tunes from tapes and records, slowing them down to half speed. One tape I had of Clarence White, and I transcribed every note until I was sure it was perfect. A year later I went back and checked my transcription. It was good, but I had gotten a few things wrong. I corrected it. Now I had the perfect transcription! A year or two later I checked again. It was almost perfect, but I still had to make some corrections. Point is, I was listening as carefully as I could each time I checked, but my ear improved so that I heard more over the years. Even if you don't hear it all the first time, the process will improve your ear, and you will hear more the next time!

Listening to the classics—Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, Stanley Brothers, Jimmy Martin, etc., is like having a yardstick to compare your playing to. What DOES a good bluegrass band sound like? How is Lester Flatt's rhythm different from Jimmy Martin of Carter Stanley or Edd Mayfield? Tony Rice has often recommended seeking out the old live tapes of these bands to learn from. Here's a project. Get your band to learn one song/tune from each of these bands. The idea would be for everyone to learn every rhythm lick and every lead lick to make it sound as close to the original as humanly possible. If Bill Monroe's mandolin chop drops out during a chorus, then your mandolin player would do the same. Everyone would have to focus on every detail. Of course, you may not be able to duplicate the singing, but the important thing is the band sound. Can you make you make your band bounce on "Hold Whatcha Got" like Jimmy Martin?

After a gig, a bunch of people come up to you and say, "You were really hot tonight, I love your playing!" If you taped it, you go home and listen, and it sounds bad to you. On another night you feel terrible about how badly you played, but on listening to the tape, it wasn't so bad! My friend Larry Cohea calls this the 50% rule—If you think you played well, you probably didn't play as well as you thought, and if you think you played poorly, you probably didn't play as bad as you thought. But the tape doesn't lie. I tape as much as I can, then listen for things like: Was my backup at the appropriate volume? Was I too busy? Should I have put a run in there? Did the run clash with what was happening in the band? Do I have to work on a lead? Did it make musical sense? Was I in time? Am I getting the tone I want? Should I not play a break on that tune? ..and so on. Feedback, both from friends and tape can help with your awareness of what your doing. But remember that tapes don't lie.

By constantly working on your awareness, your awareness of your own playing will improve, and you won't be stuck in the position of being blissfully incompetent. Excuse me while I go listen to a tape...

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John McGann's Eclectic Acoustic

Belfast Hornpiple

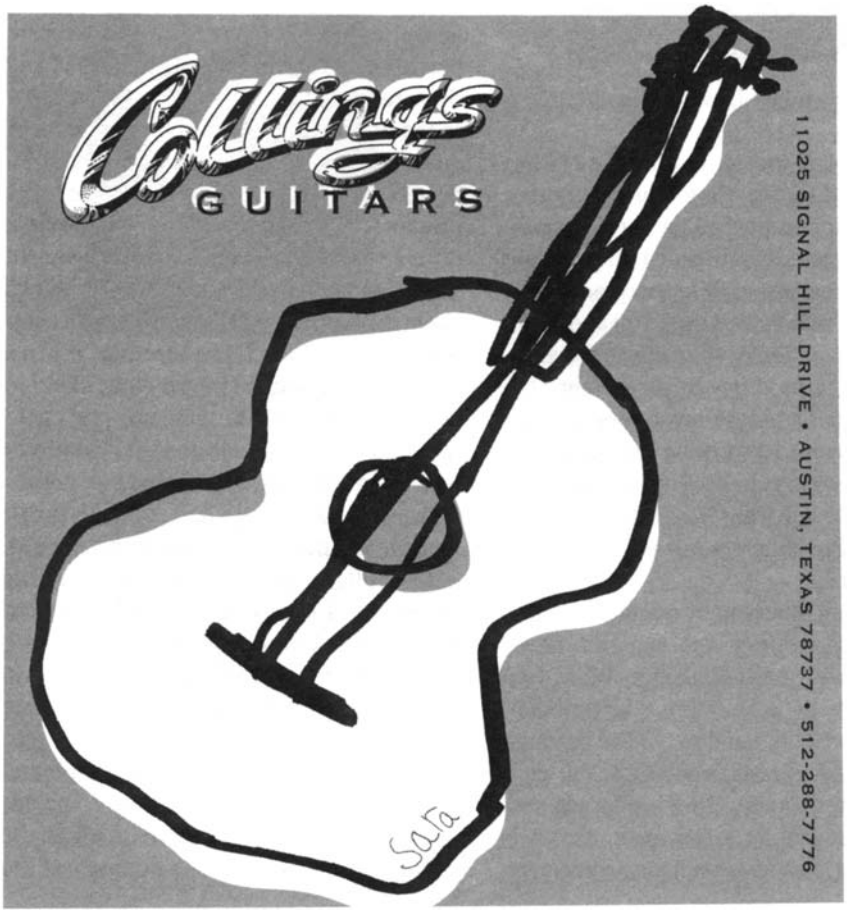
Here's a popular Irish session tune that makes a lovely dropped-D solo guitar piece. I play this tune at a fairly slow tempo, and have worked on the phrasing to maximize sustain. I use a combination of the pick and fingers to get the low D string drone in the A part. I also use this hybrid picking for the last phrase of the tune. Note the extensive use of slurs (hammers and pulls) and slides, which add a legato (smooth, sustaining) sound, more in character with fiddles, flutes, and pipes.

The B part is arranged to make use of "floating," which is the technique of placing consecutive scale notes on adjacent strings, so they can ring together, much like the "melodic banjo" style. The variation of B features a different way of phrasing the third and fourth measures of B.

The descending triplets in the C part sound much better to my ear with slurs, rather than picking every note, which gets to sound a bit like typing after awhile!

The chord progression, as usual, is just one possibility for the tune.

John McGann is a Boston based former National Mandolin Champion currently performing with Rust Farm, Matt Glaser and Wayfaring Strangers, Joe Derrane, Seamus Connolly and others. He can be heard regularly on the nationally syndicated PBS radio quiz show "Says You".



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Belfast Hornpipe

Arranged by John McGann

Belfast Hornpipe (con't)

New Release Highlight

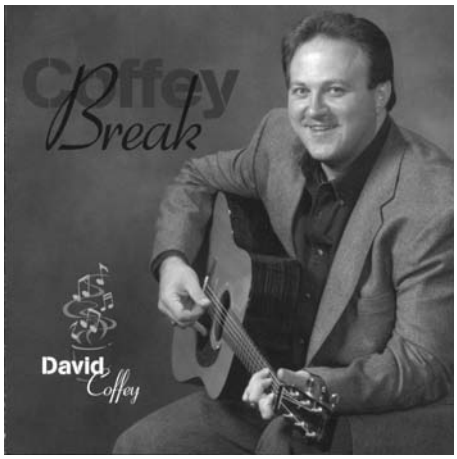
David Coffey: *Coffey Break*

by Dan Miller

Although David Coffey began playing bluegrass music when he was a young boy growing up in the Blueridge Mountains near Waynesboro, Virginia, and he has spent a good part of his life as a professional musician, his new release, *Coffey Break*, is his first recording as a front man in the bluegrass genre. A talented singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist, Coffey has given us a real ear full of this talent on *Coffey Break*—he sings lead on all vocal numbers, wrote six of the ten cuts that appear on this CD, and plays all of the instruments you hear on this record (guitar, mandolin, bass, banjo, and dobro).

A self-taught musician, David's musical journey began when he climbed up on a piano stool at the age of five and pecked out "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" by ear. When he was six, his grandfather bought him a guitar and began teaching him some of old Jimmy Rodgers and Louvin Brothers songs. David says, "I would go over to my grandfather's house every Friday night and we would play until midnight. He is the one who really got me started on the guitar." David's father is also a talented musician who plays banjo, mandolin, guitar, and dobro. David says, "My dad had all of those instruments laying around the house and he had Osborne Brother, Lester Flatt, and Bill Monroe records."

David spent much of his youth playing along with records and cassette tapes that he recorded off of local bluegrass radio programs. He states, "That is really how I learned how to play. I taught myself from records and playing with cassettes. I got real interested in the Seldom Scene when I was about 12. I taped *Gardens and Memories* on a reel-to-reel and I had the *Cellar Door* record and I played with those recordings over and over. On Saturday I would sit in the bedroom and play the guitar with the album for a while, then I 'd put the guitar down and get the mandolin and play that for a while, then get the banjo out and then the dobro. That is how I spent my Saturdays. There was probably a lot of times I missed quite a few suppers sitting in the bedroom and playing music. I loved it."



When David turned sixteen he got a phone call from a gospel quartet, The Crestman, and began his professional music career. He says, "We would leave Friday after I got out of school and play Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In the summer I toured all over the country with this band." After working with the Crestman for four or five years, singing lead and playing banjo, guitar, and keyboards, David got a call from Lew Dewitt. Lew had been a member of the original Statler Brothers and had to leave the band due to illness. After recovering, he put together his own band. David played piano in Lew's band for three or four years. The band opened for such acts as The Judds, George Jones, Patty Loveless, and Keith Whitley.

Of his time with Dewitt, David says, "Lew taught me a lot about music and songwriting. I don't think the world will ever know just how good of a songwriter Lew was and how technical he was with music. He was real gifted. He knew a lot about music and taught me in a way I will not forget. He demanded that it be right. He was always practicing. You could go over there any time in the evening and he would be out there practicing, or writing a song."

After David had spent two or three years with Lew's band, he was out playing a gig one night in Lynchburg, Virginia, and his mother was killed in an automobile accident. After experiencing such a tragedy, David says, "I felt like I needed to get off the road for a while. I had a younger sister who was fourteen and my dad was working second shift at the time. I felt like I couldn't go back on the road for a while. The "while" turned into years."

Although David stayed semi-active in music during the years after his mother's death by playing for local churches who would ask him to sing, he has not played professionally since that time. However, with the release of *Coffey Break*, he is now ready to step back into the music business. When asked why he decided to cut a bluegrass record when his professional background had been in country and gospel music, David said, "It is getting back into

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David Coffey

playing music that I love to play. I have always played bluegrass music even when I was playing country or whatever else I was doing. I was always keeping up with my bluegrass instruments. Growing up in the Blueridge mountains, you can't get away from it. It is a part of me. It is a part of my soul."

Someone who David says has been "a source of strength and encouragement" in helping him get back into music is Verna Rodes of MasterShield Records. Several years ago, Verna had written a song for a Virginia state songwriting contest and David helped her record the tune. She says, "It wasn't long before I recognized he had a lot to offer the music world, and encouraged him to become involved once more." As a tribute to Verna, David wrote an instrumental for her which he calls "Ode to Rodes." This tune is transcribed in this issue and appears on the companion CD.

Coffey Break is primarily a vocal album and features David's smooth clear voice, his songwriting abilities, and his talent as a multi-instramentalist. He wrote four of the vocal numbers and two of the three instrumentals which appear on this recording. His singing voice and vocal phrasing are a solid reflection of his Blueridge Mountain upbringing—authentic "downhome" bluegrass. However, not all of the songs here would be catagorized as traditional bluegrass. David says that he enjoys all styles of music and when he writing as song, he writes in whatever style he feels will best convey the meaning of the words. His instrumental breaks on this project are equally as solid and impressive as the vocals.

When asked about his influences on guitar, David said, "I listened to Doc Watson. I listened to Phil Rosenthal and Tony Rice. Of course everyone listens to Tony Rice! I listened to Skaggs and Marty Stuart. There are a lot of people who I really enjoy listening to. I would say that probably Tony Rice influenced what I try to do. I am not comparing myself to him, but if I could snap my fingers and play like any one person, that is who I would like to play like."

In addition to being influenced by many of the great flatpickers mentioned above, David says that some of the influence on his guitar playing translates over from the other instruments that he plays. He said, "Some of the guitar licks that I play I think came from me playing mandolin. Some of the triplet things that I do. Some things also came from me playing telecaster in some local bands. I think you can learn something from any style of music and mold it and shape it into what you are doing. That is what I try to do."

Coffey Break is available from MasterShield Records:
(www.mastershieldrecords.com)
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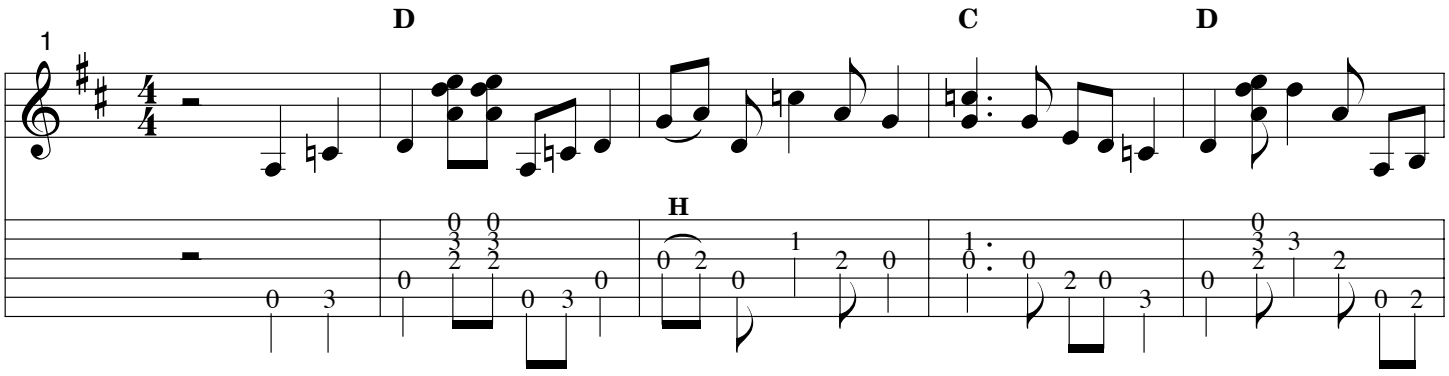
Ode To Rodes

Transcribed by Brad Davis **Written by David Coffey**

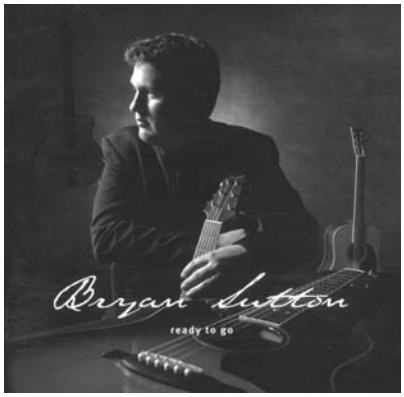


Ode To Rodes (con't)

Reviews

CD Reviews

Bryan Sutton
Ready to Go
Sugar Hill Records
SUG-CD-3906



Reviewed by Bryan Kimsey

Song List: Decision At Glady Fork; Blue Night; Brown County Breakdown; Highland Rim; When Love Comes To Town; Walk Among The Woods; Minor Swing; Tater Patch; The Water Is Wide; Grover Glen; Chief's Medley; Lady Be Good; Smoky Mountain Memories; The Good Deed

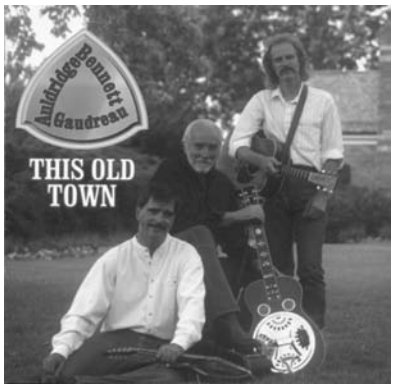
Seems like we've been waiting a long time for this album. Bryan Sutton first burst into the acoustic guitar world via Ricky Skagg's ultra-hot band where he quickly gained a reputation for smoking hot, extremely fast guitar breaks. I guess that was fine, but fast flashy guitar isn't really where my interests lie and while the rest of the flatpicking world went bananas, I calmly chewed my cud and waited. Over the years, Sutton appeared on other albums and we started to get an inkling of what his playing was like at less than 150 bpm. But still, as a guest on those albums, he usually only got 1 break and I wanted to hear him *play*.

FGM subscribers have already heard a bit of this album in the opening cut "Decision at Glady Fork." Well, it only gets better after that. There's a soulful "Blue Night" with vocals by Pat Enright. Following is a bouncy version of Monroe's cool "Brown County Breakdown." Good stuff, with multiple solos by Sutton. Boy, he sounds good, too, with a big fat tone at times and a sharp biting one at others. In fact, as I listen to this CD I'm struck by how many tones he can come up with. He's definitely one versatile guitarist. Just contrast the string pulling, fret-slapping solo on "When Love Comes to Town" with the very traditional feel of "Tater Patch" and then toss "Minor Swing" into the mix, and you'll see what I mean.

Not every tune is a hard-driving flatpicked instrumental, either. On "Walk Among The Woods" we hear a softer, swingier Sutton and if anyone has any doubts that he can slow down and play flat-out pretty guitar music, this tune should blow those doubts away. There are 4 vocal tunes here, featuring Jeff White, Pat Enright, the Issacs, and Dolly Parton. Fiddler Aubrey Haynie really shines, especially on the swing tunes and Ricky Skaggs plays some of the best mandolin I've heard from him in a long time.

It's been a long time waiting, but well worth it. Sutton's not "Ready to Go," though. He's already arrived and with this CD has established himself as one first-class flatpicker. If I gave stars in reviews, I'd just give the whole bag of 'em to Sutton for *Ready To Go*.

Auldridge, Bennett, Gaudreau
This Old Town
Rebel Records



Reviewed by Bryan Kimsey

Song List: This Old Town; Silence Or Tears; Old Columbus Blues; Love Remains; We Live In Two Different Worlds; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; Billy Gray; Come And Sit By The River; Southern Son; Glide Path; Two Hearts; You Didn't Say Goodbye; Sally On The Treadmill; Across The Great Divide

This trio is no stranger to most bluegrass fans, although this CD is their first official outing together. They have some interesting cross-ties, though. Auldridge is the former resonator player with the Seldom Scene and more recently with Chesapeake. Gaudreau is also with Chesapeake and spent many years with the Tony Rice Unit. Bennett is a guitarist of the Tony Rice school of flatpicking. The result is that these musicians play very well together (and they probably run with scissors too…) and "Old Town" is a welcome recording.

There's a lot of hot playing here and a lot of good singing. All three leaders are masters of their respective instruments and all three are fine singers. Flatpicking fans are, of course, going to be drawn to Richard Bennett's powerful guitar playing. I really liked his last solo outing *A Long Lonesome Time* and on this CD, he's matured even more as a guitarist. His solos are just flat-out great with plenty of power and punch. He plays some really interesting lines and walks the perfect line between stating the melody and elaborating on it. Vocally, Bennett has always sounded good and this outing is no exception. And finally, let's not forget his rhythm playing, which is outstanding.

The other guys, of course, are no slouches. In a quartet, every instrument must carry its weight with no slacking off. And they do. What I mostly appreciate about small bands like this one is the clarity with which each instrument comes through the mix. There's more room for interplay and more room for playing, with everybody getting plenty of solo time. Tune-wise, *This Old Town* has a great mix, with no overdone songs and quite a few new or obscure ones. You want me to pick a couple of outstanding tunes? I can't do it. They're all good and you're going to buy the album anyway. *This Old Town* is well worth your hard-earned $15, trust me.

Nickel Creek
Nickel Creek
Sugar Hill CD-3909

Reviewed by David McCarty

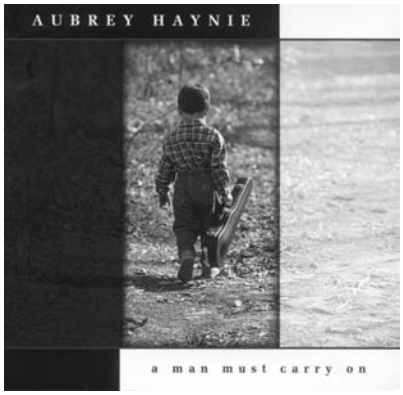
Nickel Creek, the superstar band of the future, has made a great CD for the here and now. Incorporating the combined talents of teen phenoms Sara Watkins on violin and vocals, brother Sean Watkins on guitar and vocals, and the truly gifted Chris Thile on mandolin and vocals, Nickel Creek is loaded with instrumental firepower. One listen to Thile's instrument original, "House of Tom Bomdadil," reveals how gifted these young players are. Thile's mandolin dances across the fingerboard like a Russian gymnast after a Starbucks binge, and Sean Watkins' flatpicking on his Bourgeois dreadnought is clean, musical and filled with great crosspicking and syncopated rhythms.

CD producer Alison Krauss' dreamy, romantic production style is evident on tunes like "Out of the Woods," where multiple vocal and instrumental harmonies are suspended in an ethereal, reverb-tinged mix to beautiful effect. Sara Watkins has a beautiful, delicate voice, a talent Krauss knows how to emphasize better than anyone else, and it's played up beautifully on "Reasons Why," written by brother Sean and David Puckett. His guitar solo here sounds achingly similar to Ron Block's best work with Union Station, precise, direct and always melodic.

Listening to this CD, it's difficult to imagine that with the exception of family patriarch Scott Watkins on acoustic bass, this is a band of musicians who can't yet order a beer. Over and over, they demonstrate a cohesive musical direction and great maturity. Just listen to Thile's wonderful musical adaptation of the Robert Burns' poem "Sweet Afton" for a glimpse into how advanced and sophisticated this CD is. With no banjo in the mix, it's not exactly bluegrass. But it's consistently excellent—and frequently brilliant—contemporary acoustic music. When the kids kick into the traditional "Cuckoo's Nest," there're notes flying around like a flock of woodpeckers turned loose inside the C.F. Martin plant.

On the downside, parts of *Nickel Creek* do sound like warmed-over Alison Krauss and Union Station; in my opinion, the CD would have benefited from bringing a guest artist in on banjo and turning up the tempo on a couple of tunes. Flatpicking fans will find much to appreciate in Sean Watkins' precise, tasteful playing, but may walk away from this CD wishing he'd had a few more chances to play some hot breaks. All in all, though, this is a band with heart and brains and style making wonderful acoustic music.

a man must carry on
Aubrey Haynie
Sugar Hill CD-3908



Reviewed by David McCarty

If you're like me and feel that Haynie's 1997 debut CD, *Doin' My Time*, was one of the truly great bluegrass CD of recent years, then the chance to hear his latest work is something to be anticipated and celebrated. Over the generous 16 tunes here, Haynie proves that he's incapable of playing a false note or putting anything less than his full heart and soul into everything he plays.

Backed by an exceptional cast of musicians including flatpicking superstar Bryan Sutton, Bela Fleck, Jerry Douglas, Scott Vestal, Tim O'Brien, Bobby Hicks and more, *a man must carry on* crackles with energy like a frying hen trying to escape the chopping block. Nearly every tune here is a Haynie original, giving him the opportunity to display his enormous stylistic range on fiddle and mandolin.

The kickoff tune, "Creek's A Risin'" and "Tennessee Hardwood" are classic Tennessee bluegrass fiddle tunes, driven along by Sutton's propulsive rhythm guitar. "Thonotosassa" is a great progressive swing tune, similar in some ways to "Cracker Jack" off his first album, and Sutton totally rips a Djangoesque solo on his Dupont jazz axe here, then drops effortlessly into a gorgeous harmonized segment with Haynie who glides off into some Dave Peters/Chris Thile-like triplets in his brilliant solos. In that same swingy bag is "Happy Go Lucky"—more Gypsy jazz, more brilliant playing all around.

There's something for listeners of all tastes here. The boys romp through two great, overlooked fiddle tune classics, "Buffalo Gals" and "Butcher Boy" to show off their traditional chops. "Lakeland" has a Monroe-meets-the-21st Century-head-on feel similar to the gorgeous "Leavin' Rosine" off Haynie's first CD. The title tune, sung by Ronnie Bowman, could be recorded by other artists for years to come.

In the last three years, Aubrey Haynie has grown and matured significantly and that growth is obvious throughout this CD. "a man must carry on" stands up to the burden of being the followup effort to *Doin' My Time*, and that's the best compliment it could receive. Highly recommended.

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Instructional Book Reviews

The Blue Book of Speed Picking
by Brad Davis
bdm publishing

Reviewed by Dan Dingeldein

The first thing readers of this magazine might ask when seeing the title and author of this book is, "Does this double-down-up technique really work?" Or more directly, "Am I going to waste my money buying this book?" So first let me tell you that the technique has worked for me. I met Brad a year or so ago and began taking lessons. I can tell you that once I got used to using the technique, my speed and note clarity did improve. It worked for me. Having said that, I will tell you about the book.

This book has 60 pages of so many licks, tricks, and other tips of the trade that if you were to memorize everything you would never run out of material. Since I am already a d-d-u practitioner, this is great for me! But if you are not comfortable with the technique, and have only had exposure to it through this magazine, there is no better way to dive right in because the presentation here is extremely thorough.

The basis of this book is to increase your flatpicking speed. Once you get through all of the material in the book you will definitely have the basics down and increasing your speed won't be a problem.

The *Blue Book* starts by explaining in detail Brad's use of grid tab. If you have difficulty reading regular tab, this tab format makes tab a lot easier to read. Next, there is a section covering traditional flatpicking (Down-Up-Down-Up). The final intro section is (Insert Dramatic pause) the basics of Double-Down-Up! I'll be the first to admit that it takes some getting used to, but once you have the basics down, things begin to happen.

One of the many things that impresses me about this book is the abundance of licks for the "Basic Chords." Brad has an average of 10 licks over each of the keys of G, C, D, A, and E. Also, he takes some of the licks and tabs them out in a variety of keys so that you can expand your lick repertoire. The book concludes with a song section which provides transcriptions of seven tunes. Here you get plenty of opportunity to study how the technique can be applied in real life application. The book comes packaged with a companion CD so that you can hear what all of the licks and tunes are supposed to sound like.

You can order Brad's book through his website www.bdmpublishing.com, or you can write BDMPublishing P.O.Box 890 Madison, TN 37116. 615-262-5066. For $24.95 this book is a great advantage for the guitar player that really wants to try something different and expand his/her playing. This book should be titled "Everything you wanted to know about the double-down-up technique but were afraid to ask," by Brad Davis.

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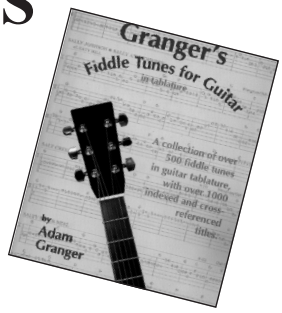
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Instructional Video Review

A Musical Journey with John Carlini
Musicians Workshop

Reviewed by David Moultrup

This video provides a compass for the guitar world. It is a beautiful lesson in an organic and evolutionary approach to the guitar. More importantly, it will help the person holding the guitar become a more complete musician, rather than "just a guitarist."

This is not a how-to video. There is an old proverb that says, give a man a fish, and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime. This video is about learning to fish. In teaching the audience how to fish, or how to approach music, Carlini clearly emphasizes some ingredients which are absolutely essential to sustaining the pursuit of the guitar over a lifetime.

The formal topics covered in the lesson include time and the metronome, bluegrass soloing, the Coltrane/Monroe connection, the tritone, the key of the week, and Bach for the acoustic guitar. But it is in the way in which these topics are approached that Carlini offers his most important lessons. Carlini, clearly, has the modesty of a master. He is humbled by music, and humbled by the guitar. This is the humility that comes after one has climbed up the mountain far enough to realize that he hasn't climbed far at all, and that the mountain is too big to ever get to the top.

He calmly emphasizes a mature perspective on the importance of developing a unique individual voice on the instrument. He clearly indentifies with a student's fears of venturing into "hard" or unknown territory on the guitar. And he has the deep resonance of the voice of experience when it comes to working through slumps.

This video will be most helpful to the intermediate through advanced guitarist who feels stagnant, and doesn't know how to move ahead. Although he does mention certain fundamental concepts in passing, some understanding of the basics would make this video much more valuable. Carlini does not spoon feed the audience. Instead, he draws the student into the beauty and mystery of music, and points towards the path of exploration.

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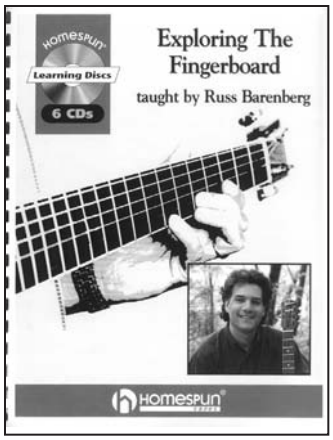
Instructional Course Review

Exploring the Fingerboard
by Russ Barenberg
Homespun Tapes



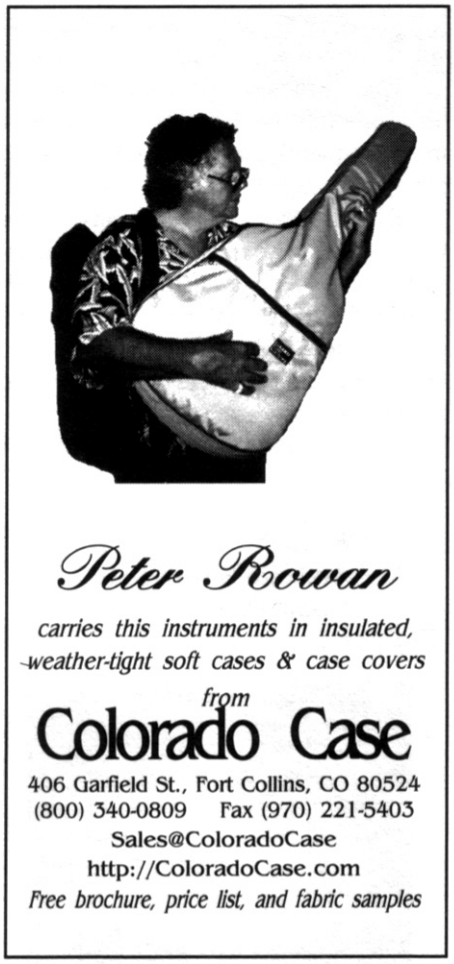
Reviewed by Dan Miller

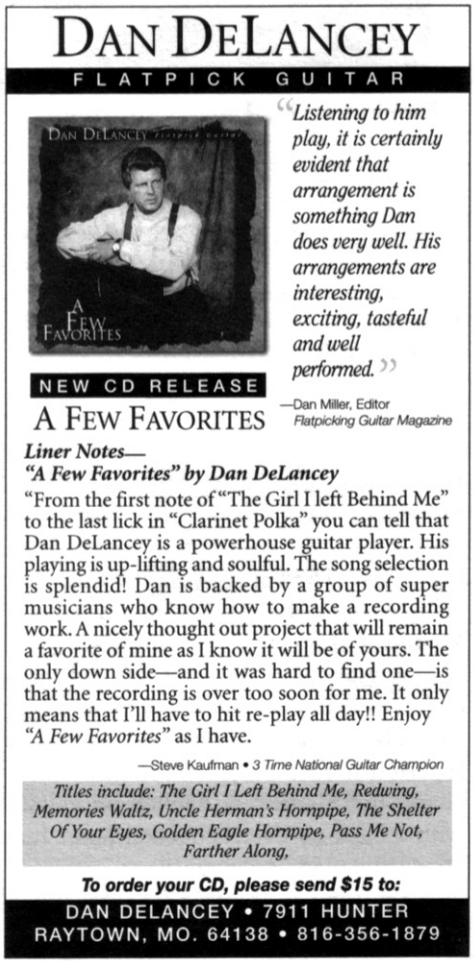
Almost everyday of the week we get calls from flatpickers who feel they have reached a plateau in the their playing and are looking for an instructional item to help break them out of their rut and get them on to another level of playing. They are tired of picking the same old songs and they are tired of learning new songs from tablature, yet they are not confident enough in their abilities to begin learning new tunes from records, start improvising or creating their own solos, or moving up the neck to explore possibilities beyond the fifth fret. If you find yourself in a similar predicament, I will recommend to you what I always recommend to those flatpickers who call and ask this question—buy Russ Barenberg's course Exploring the Fingerboard. You will not regret it.

But don't take my word for it. Let me outline what you will find in this course and you can decide if it sounds like it is worth spending your hard earned dollars. First off, for those of you who were familiar with this course when it was out on cassette tape with accompanying hand-written tablature, the new updated course now comes with six CDs and type-set tab which is much easier to work with. No more frustration in rewinding the tape to repeat a lesson or find the next lesson. Now on to the nuts and bolts.

At the beginning of the course, Russ gets started by telling us that his objectives are to teach the student how to visualize the fingerboard in a useful way, provide a method of ear training, teach some music theory that can be applied in musical ways, and give the student a knowledge of intervals. To me, the emphasis Russ places throughout the course on application of the theory and exercises to playing actual songs and improvising over chord progressions is very encouraging. I like to play the guitar for enjoyment and did not want a course that would encourage me to sit and laboriously practice scales for hours at a time.

Having said the above, I will now tell you that the first half of this course (first three CDs) deals primarily with the G major scale. Now before you run away screaming, let me explain why you get almost three full hours of instruction on the G major scale. The method of instruction here is not only focused on presenting you with specific exercises that will familiarize you with the fingerboard, it is to also provide you with the knowledge necessary to continue further study on your own. Russ shows you how to look at seven different finger positions and patterns for the G major scale and then teaches you how to apply those same positions, patterns, and exercises to every major scale. Therefore, you can apply every exercises and pattern in this course to every major scale. These seven fingering positions are presented in both a linear tablature-style representation and in a visual fingerboard pattern graphic. Each pattern is located at a different position on the neck so that by the end of this section

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of instruction you have a very good method of visualizing every major scale along the whole length of the fingerboard.

The specifics of how Russ presents each of the seven patterns starts out with the scale itself. He then breaks down the scale and presents it in a variety of five note groups. Next, he gives you some simple folk songs ("Oh, Susannah," "Red River Valley," "The Streets of Laredo") to practice which employ the notes found within the pattern so that you can immediately begin to learn how to apply the pattern musically and not just run through the mechanics of repetitive exercises. He then suggests you begin to experiment with improvisation within the pattern and provides you with several examples of improviations that he came up with. Next, he plays a number of phrases within the finger pattern that are not presented in the tablature book and asks that you use your ear and pick out the patterns that he is playing. He then provides you with a basic "rhythm track" chord progression and encourages you to experiment within the finger pattern and improvise over the chords that he is playing.

All of the material so far has been presented using just the first fingering position. Russ then runs through the same instructional process for the other six fingering positions which relate to the G major scale. Additionally, he teaches you exercises to practice shifting from one position to another, demonstrates (through exercises and songs) how to move through all of the fingering positions, shows you how to expand your vision to include the whole fingerboard picture, and explains how to figure out these same seven finger positions for all of the major scales. He also gives you some valuable tips and techniques for learning how to get the music that is in your head out to your hands and onto the guitar. In the process he throws in a few more tunes such as "Blackberry Blossom," "Dixie," and "Banks of the Ohio" in order to provide specific examples relating to the above mentioned topics.

After you have finished with the first three CDs of this course, you will have improved your ear, learned some very practical music theory, have a much better knowledge of the entire fingerboard, have a better understanding and practical knowledge of the improvisational process, and have a left hand that is ready for the Olympics. If you are like me and spend 99% of your time playing the guitar using open strings and playing below the fifth fret, the finger stretches and pinky workouts here are incredible! There are no open strings in any of the finger positions.

During the second half of the course, Russ covers three main topics: triads, minor scales, and modes. He also throws in a little info about the pentatonic scale at the end for good measure. The topic of triads is presented in order for Russ to expose you to the basic theory of chords and then show you how to play melodies using scales within chord progressions. As before, all of the presentation and accompanying exercises are very practical and useful for learning how to apply the theory to the playing of songs. You will learn how to become aware of chordal tones within melody, relate chordal tones to melody, and play melody over various chord progressions. As before, Russ teaches how to take the basic knowledge presented here, by using 7th chords as an example, and apply it to all chords so that you can continue to expand your knowledge and practice beyond what is specifically presented in this course.

The presentation on minor scales and the subsequent presentation on modes continue to build upon the knowledge presented in the first part of the course. Minor scale fingering positions are taught with an emphasis on how to figure out subsequent scales and fingering positions on your own. More improvisation practice is presented in each section. The section on modes defines what modes are and introduces the seven modes while focusing specifically on the mixolydian and dorian modes.

Throughout the course, I found that the theory of scales, chords, and modes was presented in a way that was easy to grasp. Prior to going through this course I had some basic knowledge of scales and chord structure but if someone had asked me to define musical terms such as diatonic, non-diatonic, relative minor, arpeggio, dominant 7th, scale degree, harmonic minor, ascending melodic minor, mixolydian, or ionian, I would have been hard pressed. However, I now know what these terms mean and, more importantly, can show applications of them. Thanks Russ! `

If you are looking for a systematic way to really get to know your guitar fingerboard from the first fret all the way up to the neck joint, if you would like to gain knowledge that will lead you to confidence with improvisation, and you would like to train your ear so that you can find the notes on your fingerboard that you are hearing in your head, then this course is for you. And now that Homespun is offering this course on six CDs, instead of cassette tapes, it makes it very easy to use. For a limited time (1 May through 1 July 2000), Flatpicking Mercantile is offering this course for $49.95. This is $10 off of the retail price and $5 off of our regular catalog price. Call 800-413-8296 to order.

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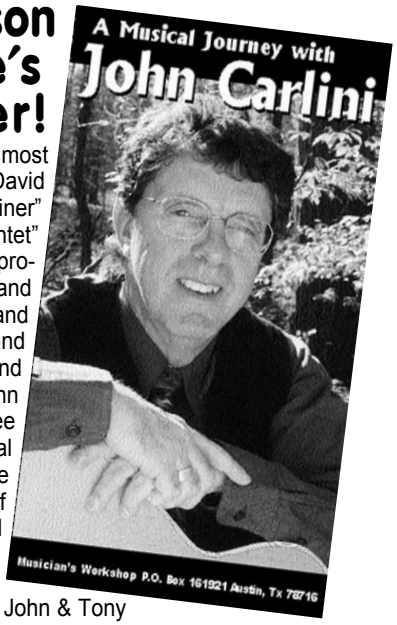

In Bluegrass circles, John is most famous for having been hired by David Grisman to be the "Personal Trainer" for the first "David Grisman Quintet" album. Why? John has been a professional Bluegrass, Jazz, and Classical guitarist for decades, and David wanted to create a new sound by adding elements of Jazz and Classical to his Bluegrass. John Carlini graduated from the Berklee School of Music, was the musical director for the "Ice Capades, the guitarist for the road company of "Grease", and has played Bluegrass with his friends: Tex Logan, Bill Keith, David Grisman, & Tony Rice for many years. Only John & Tony really know who teaches whom?

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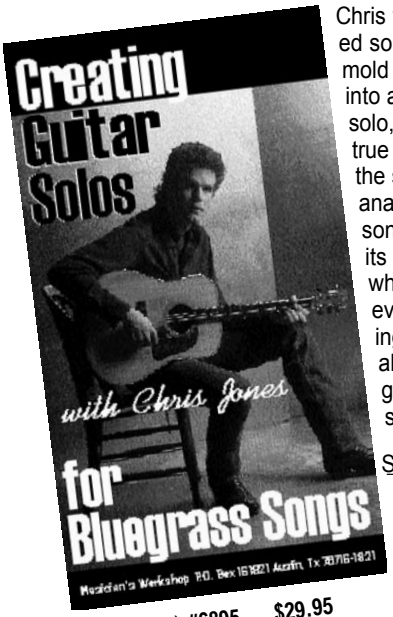

Chris takes you beyond "lick-oriented soloing by showing you how to mold a simple Bluegrass melody into a fancy, tasteful, driving guitar solo, a solo that is faithful to the true melody, while being "hot" at the same time. Watch Chris as he analyzes and teaches 5 example songs, breaking each down into its component parts, explaining why he chose what he played every step of the way. By learning this approach you will be able to invent your own intelligent, melodic solo for each song you encounter!

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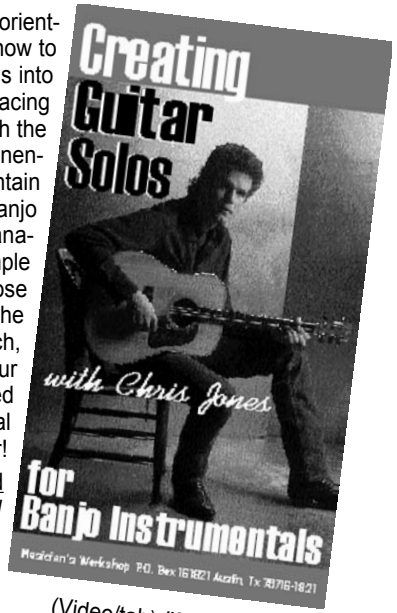

Chris takes you beyond "lick oriented" soloing, showing you how to translate banjo instrumentals into guitar instrumentals, by replacing the fingerpicked banjo roll with the more linear "guitaristic" componentry, while being careful to maintain the integrity of the original banjo piece. Watch Chris as he analyzes and teaches 5 example songs, & explains why he chose what he played, every step of the way. By learning this approach, you will be able to invent your own intelligent, melody oriented solo for any banjo instrumental you encounter!

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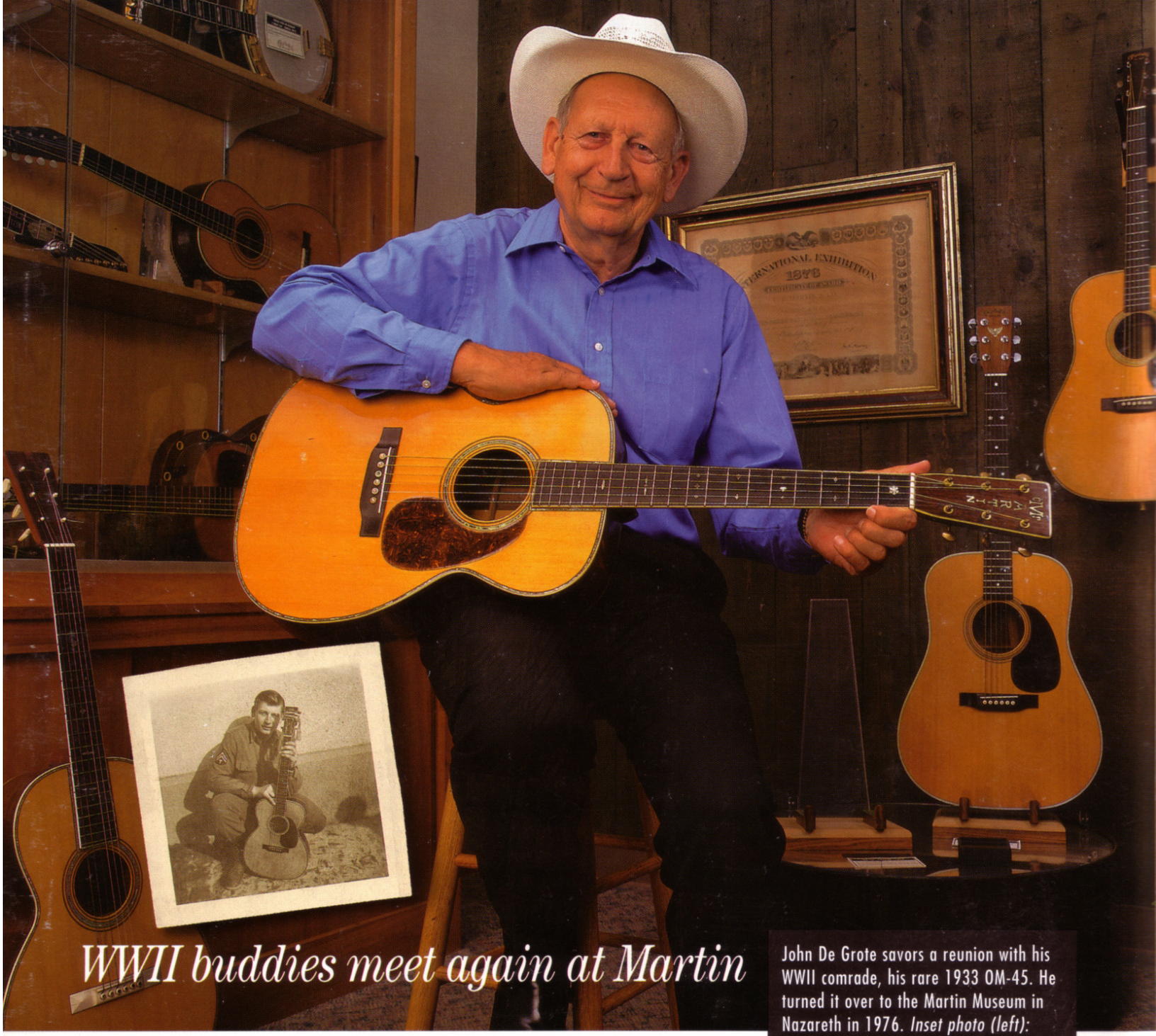

WWII buddies meet again at Martin

John De Grote savors a reunion with his WWII comrade, his rare 1933 OM-45. He turned it over to the Martin Museum in Nazareth in 1976. *Inset photo (left):* Together in Luxembourg, February 1945.

"What a thrill to get together with my old World War II companion.

"My 1933 Martin OM-45 landed with me on Utah Beach, Normandy, and we spent two years together with Patton's Third Army in seven countries—through heat, rain, snow, bombings, sniping, strafing. Every chance we got we entertained fellow GIs. And we both managed to get home in December of '45 all in one piece.

"In 1976 after years of playing together in bluegrass bands, I decided it was time to retire my partner. What better place than the Martin Guitar Museum, if Martin felt it deserved space with their other historic instruments. They did.

"I'm happy that other Martin lovers can admire my old buddy. Some 10,000 folks, I'm told, come every year. I've visited my beloved OM-45 three times now—'89, '91, and '99. It looks, plays and sounds as always, with its beauty and unmatched tone. I miss my old friend. But I have a new D-42 that shows off the same Martin traits—including easy action and that great Martin *punch*.

"Well, time to go. See you soon, old friend."—***John De Grote, Crossville, TN***

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